

# CINEFANTASTIQUE

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# STAR WARS

PHANTOM MENACE  
DARTH VADER'S  
DAVID PROWSE

KENNY BAKER  
ON R2D2

THE MEN BEHIND  
THE MASKS

Volume 31 Numbers 6



SLAVES OF THE EMPIRE: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

# CINEFANTASTIQUE

## Animating Edgar Rice Burroughs' TARZAN

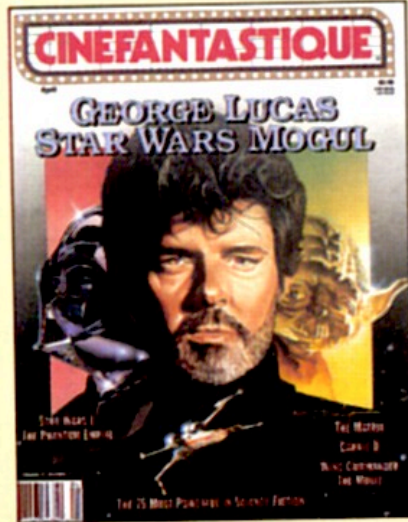
# THE REVIEW OF HORROR FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, YOUR GENRE NEWS MONTHLY

Don't miss our next exciting cover story on the making of Disney's epic animated adaptation of Edgar Rice Burroughs' TARZAN. It's Tarzan the way you've never seen him before in the movies, the way the dynamic fantasy hero was originally envisioned by his creator. Interviewed are co-directors Kevin Lima and Chris Buck, Tarzan's master animator Glen Keane, and CGI supervisor Eric Daniels on the creation of "Deep Canvas," Disney's revolutionary animation software which combines TARZAN's powerful animation with stunningly painted jungle backgrounds. Plus a profile of Tarzan's creator and his checkered movie career. It's movie coverage as only CINEFANTASTIQUE knows how!

And also in the same issue, behind-the-scenes of the filming of WILD,WILD WEST, including interviews with director Barry Sonnenfeld, star Will Smith, and production designer Bo Welch. Plus director Jay Roach on filming AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME, our review of STAR WARS: THE PHANTOM MENACE, and much more!

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"The Magazine with a Sense of Wonder"

JUNE 1999

Everywhere you look, it's Lucasmania, as the world gears up for the release of the first new STAR WARS film since 1983. Television shows feature clips; magazines (like ours) run cover stories; and even the trailers have been reviewed in newspapers, as if they were works of art in their own right.

It's interesting to note how things have changed since the franchise made its debut over two decades ago. At that time, STAR WARS was seen as an immensely entertaining film but not a serious work of art, nor as some kind of important cultural artifact. With the ensuing sequels, novels, TV specials, toys, and games, the phenomenon extended far beyond the films themselves, which have become little more than flashpoints used to ignite a new round of merchandising. Which doesn't mean that THE PHANTOM MENACE will be bad, only that its quality is more or less irrelevant to the attention the film receives, because everyone knows that, one way or another, this film will be the big blockbuster of the year.

This probably sounds like the usual, critical rant of the kind often directed at popular filmmaking. However, there is a more subtle irony I want to observe: whereas the first STAR WARS was seen as something of a step down from what a Hollywood blockbuster was capable of achieving (hey, it came out in the same decade as THE GODFATHER), THE PHANTOM MENACE is actually being seen as a big step up from most recent summer movie fare. A lot of this no doubt has to do with GODZILLA's over-hyped ad campaign last year, which blared "Size Does Matter"—a sort of direct contradiction to Yoda's famous line, "Size matters not." Since then, the unofficial catchline for THE PHANTOM MENACE (encouraged by the official website) has become "Plot Does Matter." Funny how a series once known for propping up simple storytelling with exciting action and effects, has now become the bastion of old-fashioned narrative filmmaking.

Steve Biodrowski



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## INDEPENDENCE DAY AT THE BOX OFFICE

### WILD, WILD WEST (WB)

Will Smith and Kevin Kline star as James West and Artemus Gordon in this film based on the '60s TV series. The script by Jeffrey Price and Peter S. Seaman involves an attempt by Dr. Loveless (Kenneth Branagh) to assassinate President Grant (Kline in a dual role). With Barry Sonnenfeld in the director's chair, and a release timed to cash in on the lucrative July Fourth Weekend, Warners is obviously expecting this film to duplicate the box office success of MEN IN BLACK (not to mention star Will Smith's previous summer blockbuster, ID4). Apparently, the other studios agree, as they are opening no competing films that weekend.

July 2



### THE MUMMY (Universal)

May 7

After a decade in development hell, one of Universal's classic monsters finally comes back out of his tomb for a new generation of filmgoers. SEE PAGE 22

### STAR WARS, EPISODE ONE: THE PHANTOM MENACE (Fox) May 19

Originally announced for May 21, this STAR WARS prequel had its debut moved up two days to Wednesday, to get a jump on the competition. SEE PAGE 8

### SUPERNOVA (MGM)

September

This film was set to open in March, until Walter Hill left the project during post-production. MGM completed the film without his involvement. Although it was originally reported that Hill would retain his director's credit, he later announced that he would try to have his name replaced with the DGA's "Alan Smithee" pseudonym.

### SOUTH PARK (Paramount)

June 18

"Oh my god, they killed Kenny!" "You bastards!" That's right: those foul-mouthed kids from the Comedy Central cartoon are heading into their first big-screen adventure. Paramount, which had great success with Beavis and Butt-head's big screen debut a couple years ago, is releasing this animated feature on the same day as Disney's TARZAN. You've got to admire their nerve.

### TARZAN (Disney)

June 18

It's been awhile since a Disney animated feature opened in head-to-head competition with a rival release. Can this adaptation of Edgar Rice Burroughs' most famous character withstand the competition from Stan, Kyle, Cartman, and Kenny? SEE PAGE 7

### THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR (Columbia)

May 28

Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin exec-produced this science fiction film about a business tycoon (Armin Mueller-Stahl) leading a double life: one in the contemporary, real world; the other in a technologically-recreated 1937. SEE PAGE 18

### TWIN DRAGONS (Dimension)

Now Playing

In this dubbed Hong Kong import, Jackie Chan stars as identical twins separated at birth: one is a martial arts expert, the other a symphony conductor. Needless to say, the mild-mannered conductor is mistaken for his double by the criminals, and the twins end up trading places, to comic effect. Yes, it's one of the oldest clichés around, but Chan milks it for all it's worth. The genre element takes the form of a psychic connection between the twins, so that each character feels what is happening to the other. In the finale, this is put to hysterically funny use, when the conductor is manipulated, like a puppet on a string, by his caged twin, who thus uses his martial arts prowess by remote control to defeat the bad guys. Amusing stuff, recommended.

### AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME (NL)

June 11

Michael Myers returns in this sequel to the sleeper hit. Also returning is Robert Wagner, joined by newcomers Heather Graham and Rob Lowe. SEE PAGE 5

### DEEP BLUE SEA (WB)

August

A May 14 debut has been pushed back to August for this film about the pitfalls of genetically engineering sharks to have intelligence matching that of dolphins, while still retaining their aggressive instincts. Renny Harlin directed Stellan Skarsgard and Samuel Jackson in a script by Duncan Kennedy and John Zinman.

### EXISTENZ (Dimension) Now Playing

David Cronenberg's new film, about videogame superstars who enter their fantasy realms via a surgical implant in the lower back, reached theatres a bit sooner than originally planned. Cronenberg had wanted a summer or fall release, but "our European distributors, who are very excited about the movie, didn't want to wait until the summer," he explained. A February 16th launch in Berlin, after competing in the Berlin Film Festival, gave way to a wide European release in France, the UK, and Spain in March, followed by the U.S. bow in late April. Cronenberg added that the new STAR WARS film was a factor. "That's coming out in May, and I don't think anyone wants to be out there up against STAR WARS, particularly if you've got a science fiction movie. I think every theatre in North America is going to be showing STAR WARS. I don't think you'll be able to see anything else." Fans of Cronenberg's oeuvre should be happy to see that many of his recurring themes and concepts are present in his latest work: the internal invasion of the body; the outcast lifestyle created by those who take living on the edge a little too far; the strange sexual symbolism, and the terrible powers that people can unleash when not held in check. "It's another metaphor, but it led me into many of the same arenas," he admitted. Jude Law, Ian Holm, and Willem Dafoe co-star.

Paul Wardle

### A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (Fox Searchlight)

May 7

Michael Hoffman directs an all-star cast and appears in his adaptation of Shakespeare's fanciful romantic-comedy. SEE PAGE 20.

### MIGHTY PEKING MAN (Rolling Thunder) Now Playing (exclusive)

Rolling Thunder and Cowboy Booking International, who brought you THE BEYOND last year, re-team for a midnight re-release of this 1977 Hong Kong production, which is perhaps best described as "Mighty Joe Egg-Foo Young." SEE PAGE 54

Steve Rylfe

### MOLLY (MGM)

Now Playing

Elisabeth Shue (LEAVING LAS VEGAS) stars as an autistic woman who is turned into a genius by an experimental medical procedure. If this sounds familiar, then either you have read Daniel Keyes' story "Flowers for Algernon," or you have seen the 1968 film adaptation, CHARLY, which won Cliff Robertson an Academy Award for his performance in the title role.

# RELEASE SCHEDULE

Upcoming cinefantastique at a glance, along with a word or two for the discriminating viewer.

compiled by Jay Stevenson  
(unless otherwise noted)



## DELAYED UNWRAPPING

### TALOS, THE MUMMY (Dimension)

This bandage epic was set to open on April 2, a month ahead of Universal's remake of THE MUMMY. But a funny thing happened on the way to theatres: SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE. What does the Best Picture of 1998 have to do with Mummies? Well, that Oscar-winner was co-presented by Universal Pictures and Miramax, and Miramax is the parent company of Dimension, which has the U.S. distribution rights to TALOS, Russell Mulcahy's independently financed horror film. Needless to say, Universal was a bit aghast to see that the company with whom they were partnered on SHAKESPEARE, was planning to turn around and stab them in the back by releasing a rival Mummy film a month before their own production reached the screens. An amicable arrangement was reached between the two companies, with Miramax-Dimension agreeing to delay their film until Halloween.

October



# HOLLYWOOD GOTHIC

## AUSTIN POWERS II

*The International Man of Mystery is swinging back into action, baby.*

by Douglas Eby

Mike Myers returns as the International Man of Mystery in AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME. In keeping with the Bond films that the character spoofs, Powers will have a new female sidekick; however, director Jay Roach confirmed that Elizabeth Hurley does make a cameo as Vanessa Kensington. "It isn't a lot of time, but she returns for a really great opening sequence," he said. "I can't reveal the outcome of what it is, but it's hysterical, and a great transition into this sequel." Also returning is Seth Green as Scott Evil. Noted Roach, "Seth is amazing. One of the best parts of doing this series is that he is, again, another great improv actor."

This time out, Heather Graham takes the female lead as Felicity Shagwell. "She was amazing," Roach enthused. "She really just became a character unlike any that I've ever seen her play. I've seen almost all of her work, and I've always been a fan, and she was my absolute first choice for the part. She has such a great mixture of a sort of '60s playfulness, and seemingly carefree attitude, mixed with an underlying intelligence, which kind of sneaks up on you. She's very, very smart. But she's so beautiful and so funny and free-spirited that you don't instantly notice how smart she is, and then when you do, you say 'Oh my God.'"

Graham's character is someone who's been a fan of Austin Powers, and has "studied his techniques, his skill and modus operandi as a spy, and has embraced them in herself," Roach said. "She's an American version of that, and drives a beautiful 1967 Corvette that's painted like an American flag, the way Austin's Jag was painted with the Union Jack. And she has some of his mannerisms and some of his sexual mores, shall we say, and prides herself on having modeled herself after him, and then the great twist is he shows up, and they seem like the perfect couple, but in



In AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME, Mike Myers returns as the '60s spy, this time assisted by Heather Graham as Felicity Shagwell.

this case, he's lost his mojo, as we say, and he is kind of not even as 'Austin' as she is to begin with. Graham loved that idea, and it kind of matched her own feelings for the character, and for Mike Myers. She really loved the character of Austin Powers, and wanted a chance to try to fit into that world. That's the kind of eagerness and earnestness with which she played the part. So the offscreen reality matched the onscreen character, so it worked out beautifully."

Other new faces include Tim Robbins, in a cameo as the President of the United States ("who is of course being threatened by Dr. Evil and blackmailed in some grand, diabolical plot," per Roach) and Kristen Johnston of THIRD ROCK FROM THE SUN. "Ivana Humpalot is a great new invention, and Kristen allowed us to completely transform her," said Roach. "In fact, it was her idea, and she has a very different look than what she has in her television world. I hope people recognize her; I mean, she's such a great actress, it's going to work whether they do or not, but I hope people also get the joy of knowing that it's her. She plays a Russian spy who's in a scene with

Rebecca Romijn, the supermodel, and they are, together, subjects for an Austin Powers' photo session. And then they have a THOMAS CROWN AFFAIR chess game, and it is so funny; it turned out so much funnier than we expected. The script was really funny, but Mike and Kristen started improvising together, and they were a riot. It's like watching great tennis players; it just goes back and forth, and you realize they're pushing each other, and drawing each other into a place of total freedom and creativity. It was really fun." □

## Battlestar Galacticas

by John Thonen

Two separate projects are under way to remake ABC's 1978 Star Wars clone, BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. In March, Glen Larson, creator-producer of the original series, and Todd Moyer, producer of WING COMMANDER, issued a press release regarding a planned \$40 million movie. To their surprise, another update of the series came to light days later, this one under the auspices of original series star, Richard Hatch.

Encouraged by continuing fan support of the show, Hatch had been meeting with Universal Pictures, who reportedly controls TV and merchandising rights to the series. Working with co-director Jay Woelfel (who directed him in two independent genre films) Hatch shot a promo film, featuring himself and several other original series stars, along with cylons, vipers, and high quality effects from Brick Price (APOLLO 13).

Larson claims rights to produce a theatrical BATTLESTAR, but has had no contact with Universal. Any opposition from the studio could tie him up in court for years. The commercial and critical failure of WING COMMANDER may also impede Larson and Moyer, whose project has few tangible assets beyond a press release. Hatch has a finished script, a completed promo film, current relations with Universal, strong ties to the fan community, and links to original series stars, all of which may put him in a preemptive position as the Battling Battlestars get under way. □

## Short Notes

The proposed SPIDERMAN movie has finally been untangled from the legal web that has been holding up production for many years. A settlement was reached with everyone making some kind of legal claim on the property, and Marvel Enterprises was able to sign an agreement with Sony Pictures Entertainment to launch a film and TV franchise. 🎬 Director **Brian DePalma** and actor **Gary Sinise**, who last worked together on SNAKE EYES, will re-team on Disney's big-budget MISSION TO MARS. 🎬 **Joe Dante**, whose SMALL SOLDIERS was something of a small comeback, has signed to direct Phoenix Pictures' cloning thriller THE SIXTH DAY, which reunites the director with producers Jon Davison and Mike Fennell, from TWILIGHT ZONE: THE MOVIE. 🎬 Oscar-winner **Kim Bassinger** will star for director **Chuck Russell** (THE MASK) in Paramount's supernatural thriller BLESS THIS CHILD, about a psychiatric nurse who must save a child from Satanists. □

# STANLEY KUBRICK 1928-1999

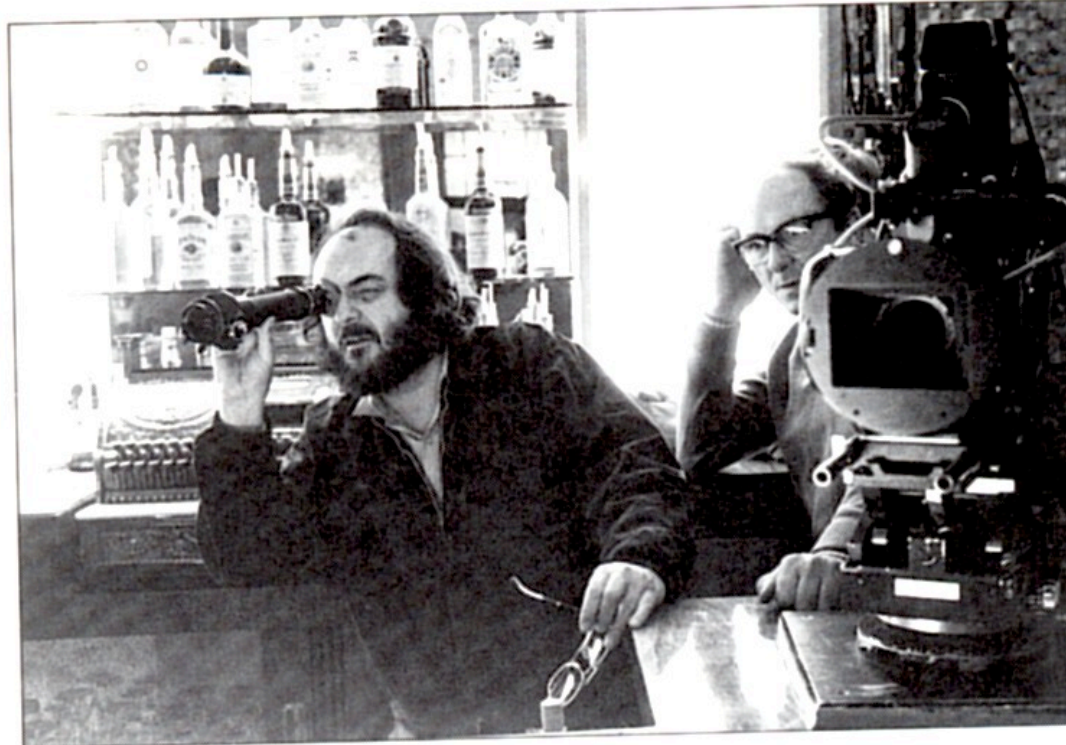
*The filmmaker who took us on the ultimate trip—a journey beyond the stars—never lived to see 2001.*

by Steve Biodrowski

Stanley Kubrick never lived to see 2001.

I find this, somehow, staggering. It's as if a part of my life has been ripped away, and will never be replaced. It seems inconceivable that the filmmaker who visualized the future so brilliantly should not live to see that future become reality. His output was small, including only four genre films (*DR. STRANGELOVE, OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB*; *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY*; *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*; and *THE SHINING*), but his imagination stretched so far that it seemed as if it would inevitably take him—and us—into the next millennium.

Of course, Kubrick wasn't really in the business of predicting the future; one certainly wouldn't want the events of *STRANGELOVE* or *CLOCKWORK* to come to pass (although one might argue that the latter, to a certain extent, already has). No, Kubrick was in the busi-



Stanley Kubrick's genre output was small—only four films—but its quality ranked him as the cinema's greatest practitioner of science fiction.

ness of speculating on what might be. Perhaps "business" is the wrong word, however; it suggests the cold sterility that too many critics mistakenly attributed to him. Rather, it would be more accurate to say that Kubrick played the great

game of "What If?"—and played it better than any other filmmaker ever has, or perhaps ever will. His vision didn't predict reality; it altered the very reality of our lives by opening up our minds to vistas we might otherwise never have imagined. Once those visions were embedded in our minds, our reality would never be the same, nor was it necessary for actual events to validate them. (As Philip Strick pointed out in his book *Science Fiction Movies*, regarding the orbiting space station seen in *2001*: "after Kubrick, you might say, there seems little point in spending a fortune on the genuine article.")

The obituaries that followed Kubrick's death did much to perpetuate the legends surrounding the man: that his films lacked soul, while he obsessed over technical details and demanded hundreds of takes from his actors. (Kubrick himself denied these rumors of multiple takes in a *Rolling Stone* interview for *FULL METAL JACKET*, but hey it makes a good story, right?) The word most often used to describe him was "eccentric," although what constituted this eccentricity was seldom defined, except to say that he chose to live in England, far away from Hollywood. One might rather have said that this was a sign of his commitment to the purity of his art, allowing him to remain untainted by Hollywood culture. "Reclusive" was another word ap-

plied to him, as though he had cut himself off from the real world, to the detriment of the human element in his films. But was his life on his estate any more reclusive than that of most Hollywood players today—who all live in the same neighborhoods, eat at the same restaurants, work at the same studios, and even marry the same wives?

No, Kubrick came off in the interviews he gave, not as some hermit disengaged from the real world, but as an incredibly brilliant man who knew far more than just how to shoot film. He was conversant on a wide variety of topics, and he used cinema not as an empty exercise in formal technique but as a way to express ideas in a profound (if occasionally obtuse) fashion. But even the obscure presentation, as in *2001*, had its benefits, turning the film into a fascinating cryptogram that revealed its secrets only gradually—a little more with each viewing, and yet never quite fully disclosing its meaning in its totality. For that reason, the film will always remain fresh, even when the date of its title is long past.

Kubrick died on March 7, at the age of 70. He had just completed his final cut, *EYES WIDE SHUT* (although some minor ADR work remained). Unfilmed at the time of his death was the eagerly anticipated *A.I.*, a project that would have returned him to themes he had explored tangentially in *2001* through the character of HAL 9000. It's sad to think that the film will never be made and, in fact, *can't* be made, now that Kubrick is dead.

The fact that Kubrick is irreplaceable is the real mark of his stature. Someone else could step in and direct a *STAR WARS* film and, as with *EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*, make it better than George Lucas could. If Spielberg doesn't do the next *JURASSIC PARK*, Universal will just hire someone else, and we'll still get a fun thrill ride. But it's absolutely inconceivable to even consider someone else stepping in to take over *A.I.* Only Stanley Kubrick could make a Stanley Kubrick film—personal, unique, brilliant, inimitable. No one else will ever come close to matching that. □

## OSCAR WINNERS

Well, genre films actually won some Oscars this year—not unprecedented but more rare than it should be. Nominees included **Ian McKellen** for Actor and **Lynn Redgrave** for Supporting Actress in *GODS AND MONSTERS*; **Ed Harris** for Supporting Actor, **Peter Weir** for Director, and **Andrew Niccol** for Original Screenplay in *THE TRUMAN SHOW*; **Eugenio Zanetti** and **Cindy Carr** for Art Direction in *WHAT DREAMS MAY COME*; **Gary Rydstrom**, **Gary Summers**, **Andy Nelson** and **Ronald Judkins** for Sound and **George Watters II** for Sound Effects Editing in *ARMAGEDDON*; **Randy Newman** for Original Dramatic Score and **Jeannine Oppewall** and **Jay Hart** for Art Direction in *PLEASANTVILLE*. In the Original Musical or Comedy Score category were nominated **Newman** again for *A BUG'S LIFE*; **Matthew Wilder**, **David Zippel**, and **Jerry Goldsmith** for *MULAN*; and **Stephen Schwartz** and **Hans Zimmer** for *THE PRINCE OF EGYPT*. The Original Song nominees were **Diane Warren** (*ARMAGEDDON*); **Carole Bayer Sager**, **David Foster**, **Tony Renis**, and **Alberto Test** (*QUEST FOR CAMELOT*); **Randy Newman** (*BABE: PIG IN THE CITY*), and **Stephen Schwartz**, who penned the winner, "When You Believe," for *PRINCE OF EGYPT*. For Visual Effects, *ARMAGEDDON* (**Richard R. Hoover**, **Pat McClung**, and **John Frazier**) and *MIGHTY JOE YOUNG* (**Rick Baker**, **Hoyt Yeatman**, **Allen Hall**, and **Jim Mitchell**) were nominated; **Joel Hynek**, **Nicholas Brooks**, **Stuart Robertson**, and **Kevin Mack** won for *WHAT DREAMS MAY COME*. The genre's other winner was **Bill Condon**, who took home the Adapted Screenplay trophy for *GODS AND MONSTERS*, based on Christopher Bram's novel, *Father of Frankenstein*. Incredibly, nominees **Mark Osborne** and **Steve Kalafer** were denied an Oscar for *MORE* in the Animated Short Film category, which instead went to **Chris Wedge** for *BUNNY*. Hey guys, you wuz robbed. □

An illustration of Tarzan, a muscular man with long brown hair, crouching on a thick, mossy tree branch. He is looking forward with a determined expression. The background is a lush, green jungle with a large tree trunk on the left and a bright light source, possibly the moon, in the upper right.

# TARZAN

**Disney Studios goes back to nature for their 37th animated film, with jungle rhythms by Phil Collins.**

**B**elieve it or not, the story of Tarzan is the second most filmed property in the world (Dracula is number one), and believe it or not, it's been remade again. This time, however, there's no "Me Tarzan, you Jane," no Cheetah the chimp, and no Olympic swimmers in the title role. This time, Tarzan is animated. For their 37th animated film, the Walt Disney Studio is adapting the Edgar Rice Burrough's classic, set to be released this June.

"We thought, 'How can we do this and do what Disney does best?'" said TARZAN's producer Bonnie Arnold. "The idea of exploring Tarzan's relationship to the animals was very appealing, because that is probably Disney's strongest suit—talking animals and the relationships between animals. That's a piece of fantasy that I think everyone wonders about: what would it be like if you could talk and communicate with animals?"

The filmmakers may be adding this new dynamic to the story, but TARZAN won't be shoehorned into the now all-too-familiar, animated feature film formula. "We didn't say, 'We're not going to do it like

## Preview by Mike Lyons

the other films,' because there are things in this film that still seem like classic Disney moments," said Kevin Lima, who co-directed with Chris Buck. "We just followed what the story told us it needed to be."

Like Burrough's classic, Disney's TARZAN begins with a family lost in a remote jungle. After the death of the parents, their baby is raised by nurturing apes. Years later, as Tarzan grows up wondering which "family" he truly belongs to, an expedition comes into the jungle, led by Professor Porter, who has brought along his daughter, Jane. When Tarzan meets Jane, it opens up a whole new world, as he sees others who are like him, including Clayton, the expedition's big game hunter, who serves as TARZAN's villain. Clayton's goal is to "bag" a gorilla, which will lend the film its conflict and tension, as Tarzan must decide between these two worlds.

"He's a child who is trying to find himself," said Glen Keane, one of the Disney's studio's

master animators, who is supervising the character of Tarzan. "And the thread of our story follows a very human, natural quest that we all go on."

Tony Goldwyn, who played the villain in 1990's GHOST, serves as the voice of Tarzan, with Minnie Driver as Jane, noted British thespian Nigel Hawthorne as Porter, and Brian Blessed (The ghost in Kevin Branagh's HAMLET) as the blustering villain, Clayton. For the jungle cast, Kala, Tarzan's ape mother, is voiced by Glenn Close; Terk, Tarzan's gorilla sidekick, is Rosie O'Donnell; Tantor, the skittish elephant, is given voice by Wayne Knight (SEINFELD's Newman); and the patriarch gorilla, Kerchak, is the baritone voice of Lance Henriksen (MILLENNIUM).

Songs also play a large role, but don't look for the usual show-stoppers amid the swinging vines; instead, TARZAN uses music quite differently. "We began to question whether the characters really had to sing," noted co-director Chris Buck.

"Then, the year that we started working on the film, TOY STORY came out, and they were very successful with not having the characters sing, but instead using background songs. We realized that does work and that the audience accepts it."

The filmmakers have decided to use songs as narrative, with drummer-singer-songwriter Phil Collins singing at key points in soundtrack. "We felt that his sense of rhythm was the right link for something that was set in the jungle," said producer Arnold. "It was an interesting marriage of his abilities as a songwriter with his sense as a percussionist."

TARZAN will also break with the way in which traditionally animated films utilize computer generated imagery. Eric Daniels, who is supervising the film's CGI, has created a ground-breaking software program, called "Deep Canvas," which will give TARZAN more depth of field. The scenes in which Tarzan swings, leaps, and glides from tree-to-tree take on a dizzying perspective never achieved before in animation.

According to Arnold, what's unique about Deep Canvas, is the way it achieves this while

Top of page: Disney's Tarzan is a "child who is trying to find himself," according to master animator Glen Keane, who supervised the character.

continued on page 61

# STAR WARS

## THE PHANTOM MENACE

**George Lucas wraps up Episode 1 and looks forward to directing 2 and 3.**

**E**ven before the arrival of *THE PHANTOM MENACE* on May 21st, George Lucas has been busy planning the second episode of his trilogy of *STAR WARS* prequels. Lucasfilm announced last November that plans for shooting segments 2 and 3 have been confirmed for the new Fox studios complex near Sydney, Australia.

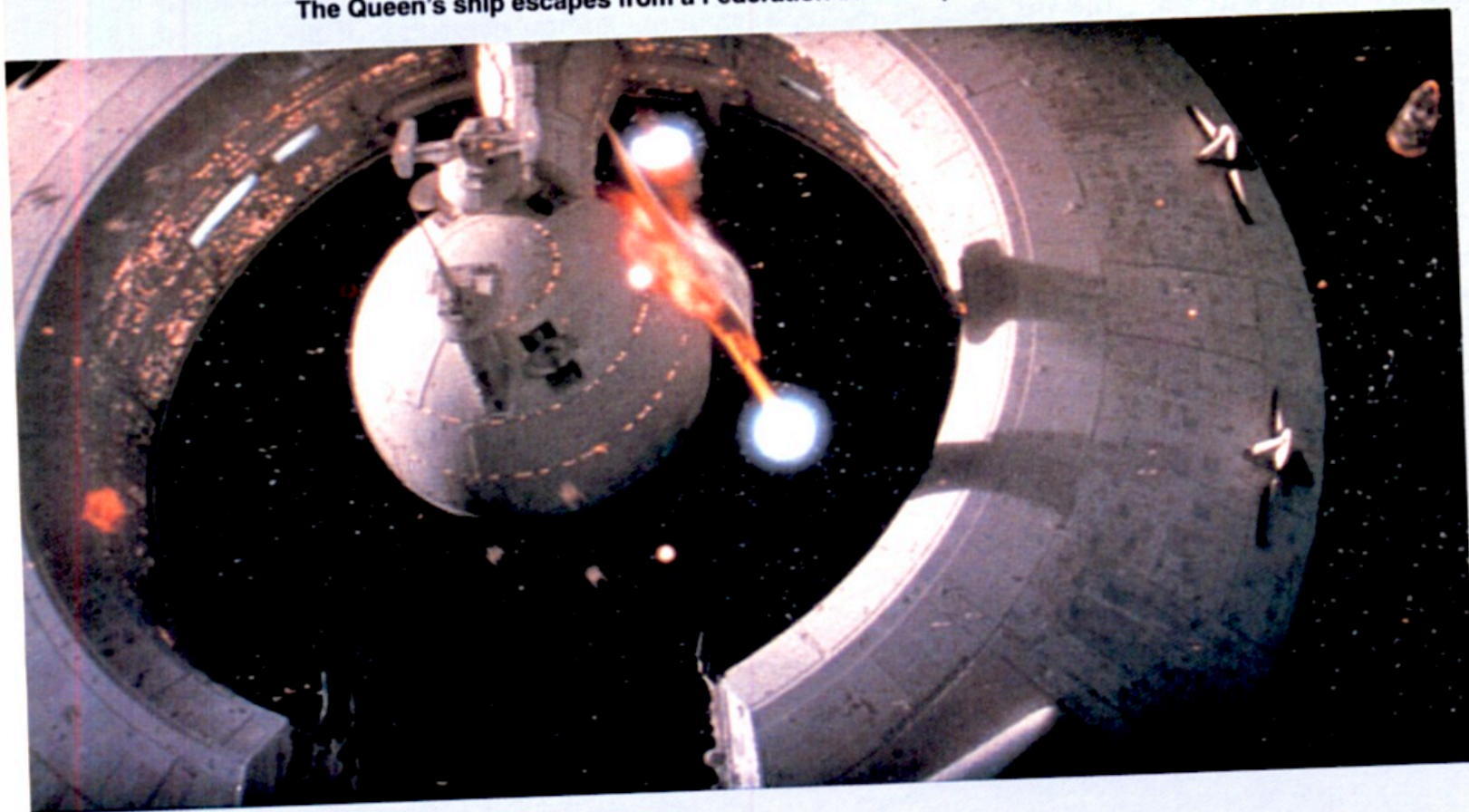
Lucas himself attended a meeting of the Australian Screen Producers Association, where he held a press conference, noting that he would "probably" be directing the next two episodes of the trilogy, with Episode 2 now slated to begin shooting in late 2000, (for release in May, 2002). Lucas

**BY  
LAWRENCE  
FRENCH**

*THE PHANTOM MENACE*, as the executive producer, screenwriter and director, Lucas has the ultimate control—there's nobody who can say no to him. Lucas joked that, "I knew the writer very well—and didn't have any problems with him. I also knew the executive producer very well, so if I ever had problems with the producer [Rick McCallum], the executive producer would pound him. So it was a much easier experience all the way around."

acknowledged that after taking a sabbatical from directing for over 20 years, he has found directing to be a lot of fun. Lucas also pointed out that one big difference directing now, is that "he owns the studio."

The Queen's ship escapes from a Federation battleship in *THE PHANTOM MENACE*.

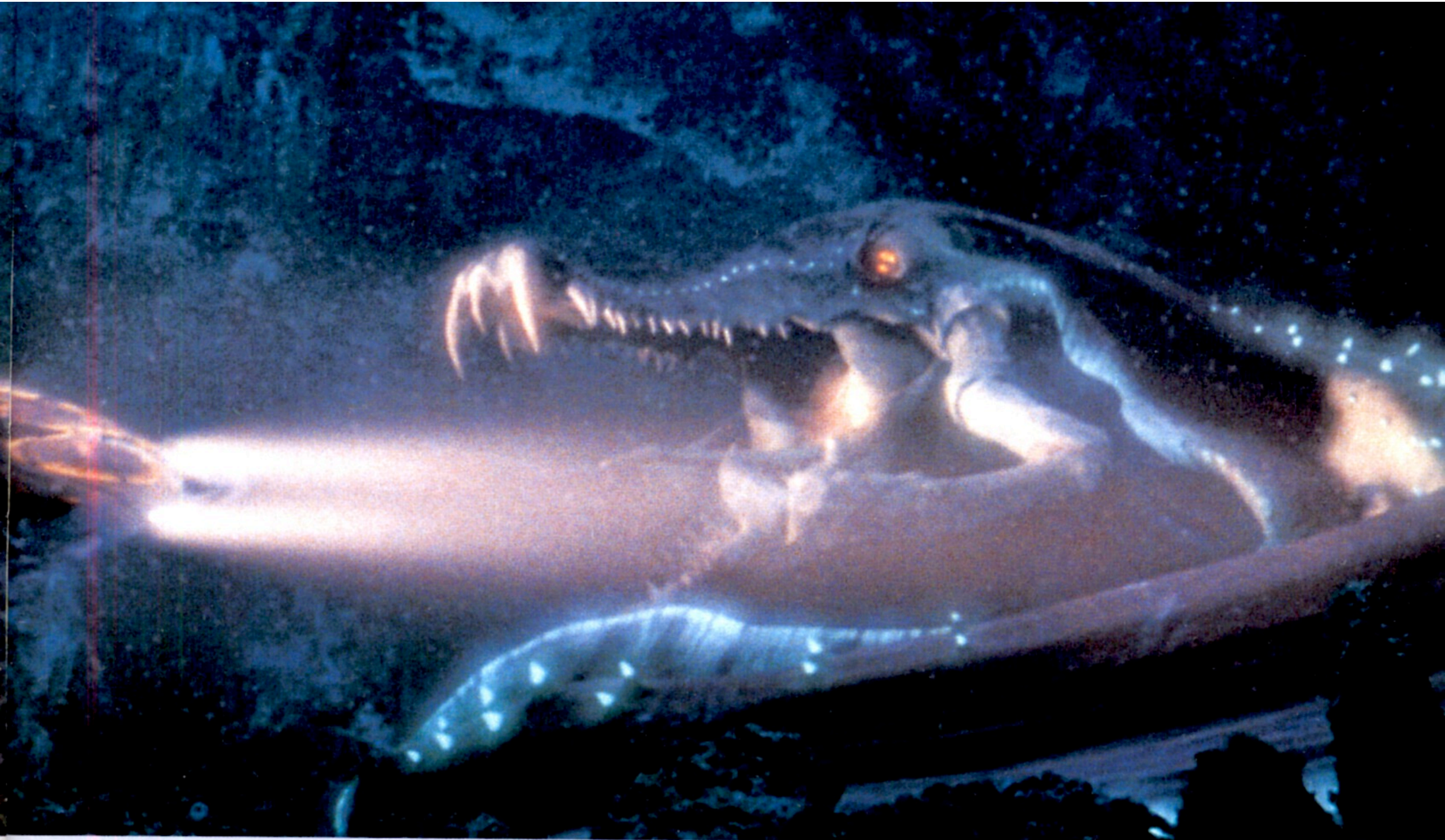


*PHANTOM MENACE* repeats many familiar images.

Lucas contrasted the pleasant working environment he experienced on *THE PHANTOM MENACE*, with the nightmare he encountered while trying to get the first *STAR WARS* made. "I was 28 when I did *STAR WARS*," he explained. "I was working in England, and I was doing a film that nobody understood, in a genre that nobody liked, in a country where film was fading fast—so it was not an easy experience. Many of the crew didn't like me—I was American, and I was young. Most people thought it was a joke. I had very little money, and a studio on my back all the time. It was very difficult. And I had come off two pictures that had been re-cut after I finished them, so I had this fear that the studio was going to take my movie away and re-cut it." In fact, the experience of making *STAR WARS* traumatized Lucas to such a degree that he subsequently abandoned his directing career altogether. Ironically, it was at a point in time when his great success would have given him carte blanche at any studio in Hollywood. But it was already too late.

Lucas said, "I was tired of directing. *STAR WARS* had gotten too big. There was too much going on—too many departments, too many ideas. I realized that in order to do the [sequels] I was going to have to move up and be an executive producer in order to oversee everything. But making a movie is the easy part. It's all that other stuff—the studio and getting it approved [that's hard]. But now I'm back... And I look forward to the day when I'm going to





Top: A small submersible is attacked by a sea monster, rather like the shot in *EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* of the Millennium Falcon evading the crater monster.

direct something other than *STAR WARS*."

However, if *THE PHANTOM MENACE*, which is set to open on 3,000 plus screens, does anywhere near the record business most observers think it will, Lucas won't be free to direct a non-*STAR WARS* movie for the next six years. By that time the director will be 62, and may not have too many prime directing years left. But as he told *Newsweek* in 1995, "My life is making movies, and I've got a lot of stories that are stored up in my head that I hope to get out before my time is up. It's just a matter of 'how can I get through all the stories in the amount of time I have left.' I 'serendipitied' into starting companies, and building technology, and doing a lot of other things that are related to me getting to make the movies that I want to make. I've never had a real plan of, 'I want to get from here to there, and I've got to do this.' The underlying plan to everything is, I've got a bunch of movies to tell, and this is the one I'm going to do now, and this is the one I'm going to do next. And then I focus on the one at hand."

*THE PHANTOM MENACE* is the one currently at hand, and Lucas is unwilling to make any predictions on its success, but he's no doubt far more relaxed than 22 years ago, when he nervously sat on a beach in Hawaii, thinking the most *STAR WARS* could possibly gross was \$25 million (the amount brought in by *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY*). Today, many pundits are predicting (perhaps optimistically) that *THE PHANTOM MENACE* will surpass



Above: The evil Darth Maul (Ray Park) faces off in a light saber duel with a Jedi Knight. Below: Qui-Gon (Liam Neeson) and Obi-Wan (Ewan McGregor) debate about what to do with young Anakin Skywalker.





A large Federation transport pursues Qui-Gon (Neeson) and various animals through a forest in the PHANTOM MENACE, the first in the STAR WARS prequel trilogy.

the \$600-million domestic mark set by James Cameron's TITANIC, but Lucas is not even willing to bet the film will beat the \$90 million opening weekend record set by Steven Spielberg's THE LOST WORLD. Of course, if the film were to lose steam at around \$300 million, the huge expectations it's already engendered would work against it, meaning it would be widely seen as a flop.

However, what should be most important to both Lucas and audiences, is what he has managed to accomplish on the screen. Will the film measure up to STAR WARS, or will Lucas be recycling stale ideas left over from the first trilogy? A quick look at the plot for THE PHANTOM MENACE reveals a series of awfully familiar situations, but Lucas maintains that while "it's reminiscent of the old films, it's very different." The film opens with two Jedi Knights, Qui-Gon Jinn (Liam Neeson) and Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor) en route to the peaceful planet of Naboo, which is being threatened with occupation by the greedy Trade Federation, who in turn, are fronting for the devious ambitions of Darth Sidious, the phantom menace of the title. Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan visit Queen Amidala (Natalie Portman) at her royal palace in Theed, and persuade her to visit Coruscant, where she can appeal directly to the Galactic Senate for help. Fleeing from Naboo on the royal spaceship, they encounter Federation warships, and after a space battle are forced to land on Tatooine, to make repairs to the hyperdrive. Meanwhile, Darth Sidi-

ous has dispatched his prime henchman, Darth Maul to Tatooine, in order to capture the Queen and dispose of her two Jedi escorts. On Tatooine, Qui-Gon comes in contact with the nine-year-old Anakin Skywalker, and realizing "that the force is strong with young Skywalker," takes him to Coruscant to be trained as a Jedi Knight.

Since Liam Neeson plays the elder Jedi Master (approximating the role Alec Guinness played in STAR WARS), it isn't hard to guess who will perish when Qui-Gon faces Darth Maul in the film's climatic light-saber duel. Lucas himself noted the similarity between the two roles, when asked why THE PHANTOM MENACE wasn't cast with unknown actors—as he had done previously with STAR WARS. "When I did STAR WARS," said Lucas, "I had the Alec Guinness character, who is the stalwart, pivotal center of the movie, and I now have Liam Neeson playing that same [type of] part. To say that

Liam Neeson is a bigger actor today than Alec Guinness was 20 years ago, I don't know. Alec Guinness was a very respected actor. Liam Neeson is a very respected actor. Alec Guinness wasn't Clark Gable, and Liam Neeson isn't Tom Cruise. The other actors, Natalie Portman and Ewan McGregor, were relatively unknown. They had been in some small films, but they weren't really mainstream actors. I've got a good cast, and it's not cast with a lot of movie stars."

No doubt, the one area where the movie will be exemplary, is in the technical marvels it will be able to achieve. Lucas's ILM has been the unsurpassed leader in the effects field since the original STAR WARS debuted in 1977—despite the constant internal turmoil at ILM—where general managers and high profile effects supervisors seem to leave with alarming regularity. Producer Rick McCallum told *The Star Wars Insider* that ILM will have set new standards in the area of character animation.

"And it's not just the character animation," he noted. "They are also creating 3-D environments... Between Dennis Muren, John Knoll, Scott Squires, Rob Coleman and Scott Farrar, they set standards themselves. They are pushing out between 35 to 50 shots a week, and they are doing it on budget. They have produced some extraordinary work. What we finished six months ago was bigger than any film that has been done up to now. What we are doing now, each week, is bigger than any picture that's ever been. It is really remarkable." □

Enter Darth Maul (Ray Park), ready for his showdown with Qui-Gon.



# STAR WARS

## FORCED BACKWARDS

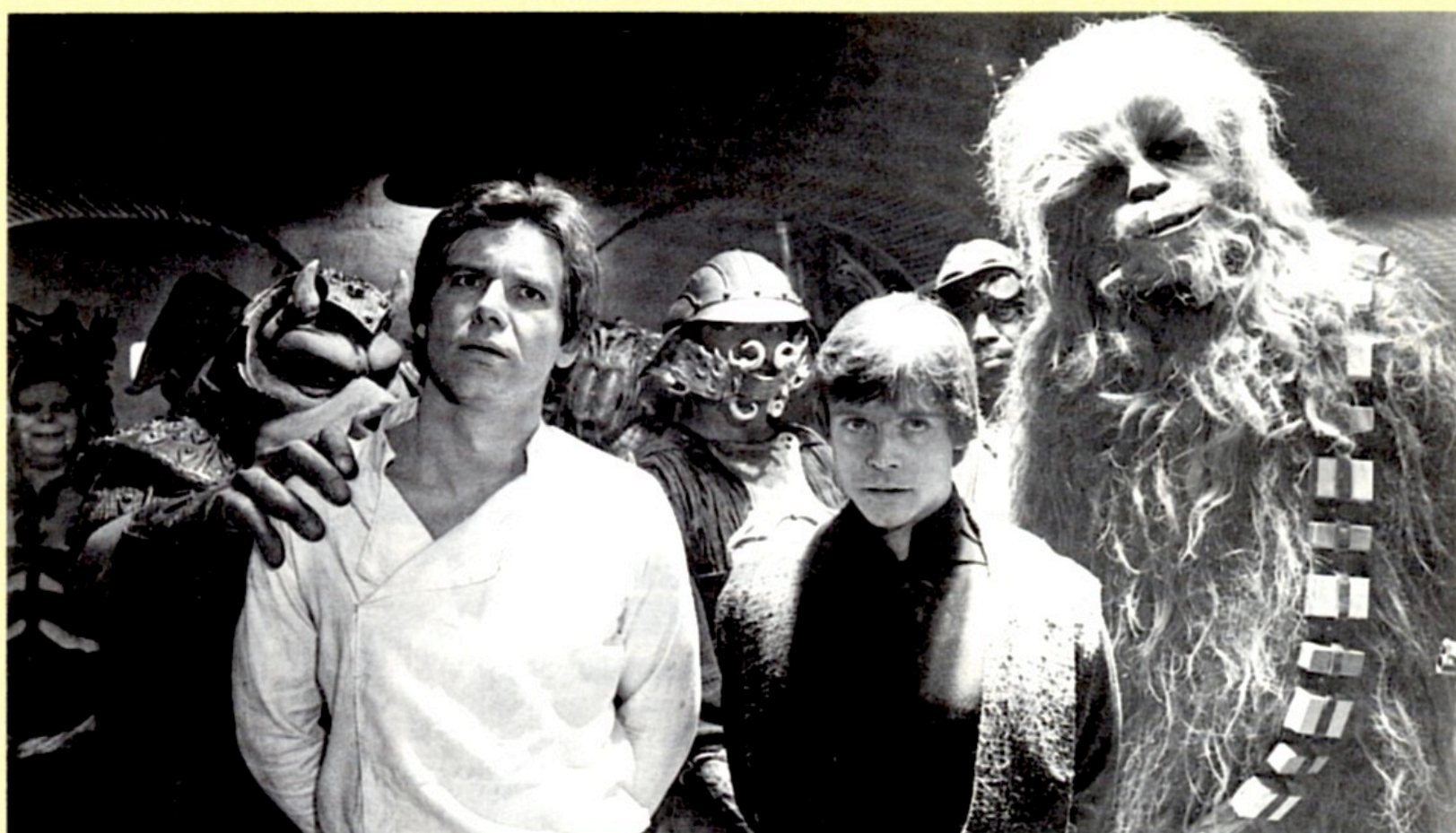
*Why Lucas should have made sequels, not prequels.*

**A** fundamental mistake has been made, a mistake so simple and basic that its very prosaic nature has provided a dark cloak of subterfuge and deception. And that fundamental mistake is: the decision to go backwards.

The fact that George Lucas is going ahead with episodes One, Two, and Three is highly counter-productive to the extension of the STAR WARS universe beyond what has been represented by episodes Four, Five, and Six. Imagine Memorial Day 1999: the local multiplex has been monopolized to the fullest extent by Lucas' product; all 14 screens are showing THE PHANTOM MENACE. You are lucky enough to snag tickets. You are standing in a long, long line which is snaking around corners and blocks. What are you feeling as you move at an agonizingly slow pace toward your seat? Fear. Because deep in your heart, you're worried that the whole thing might not equal the sum of its parts.

The triumvirate of characters we've come to love—Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia Organa, Han Solo—will not be present. Those three characters and their wonderfully told exploits have become so inculcated in our psyches that it's going to be tough to let go. And consider: no matter that NEW HOPE, EMPIRE, JEDI are designated Four, Five, Six, respectively, it is just a trick of convention; in real relative terms, we will always orient them in our minds as One, Two, Three. The supposed sequences' only purpose was to give an old-fashioned, serial-like ambience to the project; it has no real meaning or significance.

*No...there is another....* Another way, to be specific. Lucas should have gone forwards instead of



The story of familiar characters like Han, Luke, and Chewbacca has already been concluded in RETURN OF THE JEDI. A long preamble establishing the back story to this is less interesting than a new story about what happens next.

backwards. The events predating NEW HOPE should be exploited in some fashion. Telling these tales in a synthesis of books, comic books, video games, etc., would've comprised an ideal vehicle for getting the stuff out there (not unlike the multimedia presentation of SHADOWS). Interestingly enough, Lucasfilm is considering applying the converse of this concept—i.e., drop the idea of filming episodes 7 through 9 and “colonize” them in other media. Absolutely brilliant idea...but it should have been done for the first three films.

We know what's going to happen. We know that young Annakin becomes corrupted by the Dark Side. We know that Obi-Wan defeats him in a battle that causes the injuries which force him onto the artificial life support system he wears throughout the first three

films. We know the final resolution and absolution of his corruption. We know what happens to his offspring. We know a lot of the punchlines. When you know the punchlines, the setups tend to become pro forma.

Many are predicting how much the prequels will gross. It's safe to say the three movies will have global grosses of at least \$2 billion after all is said and done. More interesting—and more telling—is how much they will do domestically. Eliminating the latter two movies for simplicity sake and focusing on 1999, \$350-400 million is estimated. (Don't start screaming “TITANIC is dead!” just yet.) But the domestic gross in 1999 could have been even higher, had Carrie Fisher, Harrison Ford, and Mark Hamill been on the bill.

Sure, there's some question as to whether Ford would even be in-

terested at this point, but STAR WARS launched him on the path to stardom at a time when he was about ready to give up his struggling acting and resign himself to working as a carpenter, so it's not as if he doesn't owe Lucas a little something. In short, whatever the obstacles regarding deal points, they were not insurmountable. But then Lucasfilm would have had to deal with big star salaries and demands for profit participation and merchandising royalties; unfortunately, Lucas has traditionally been reluctant to share power in his empire, and Lucasfilm would be reluctant to share its merchandising largess with anyone.

Nevertheless, there was a way to make this work, if only there had been the will. Then we could have had STAR WARS as it should have been, going forward instead of backwards. **Steven Mallas**

# STAR WARS

## KENNY BAKER

*R2-D2 returns to a galaxy far, far away, but avoids revealing any details.*

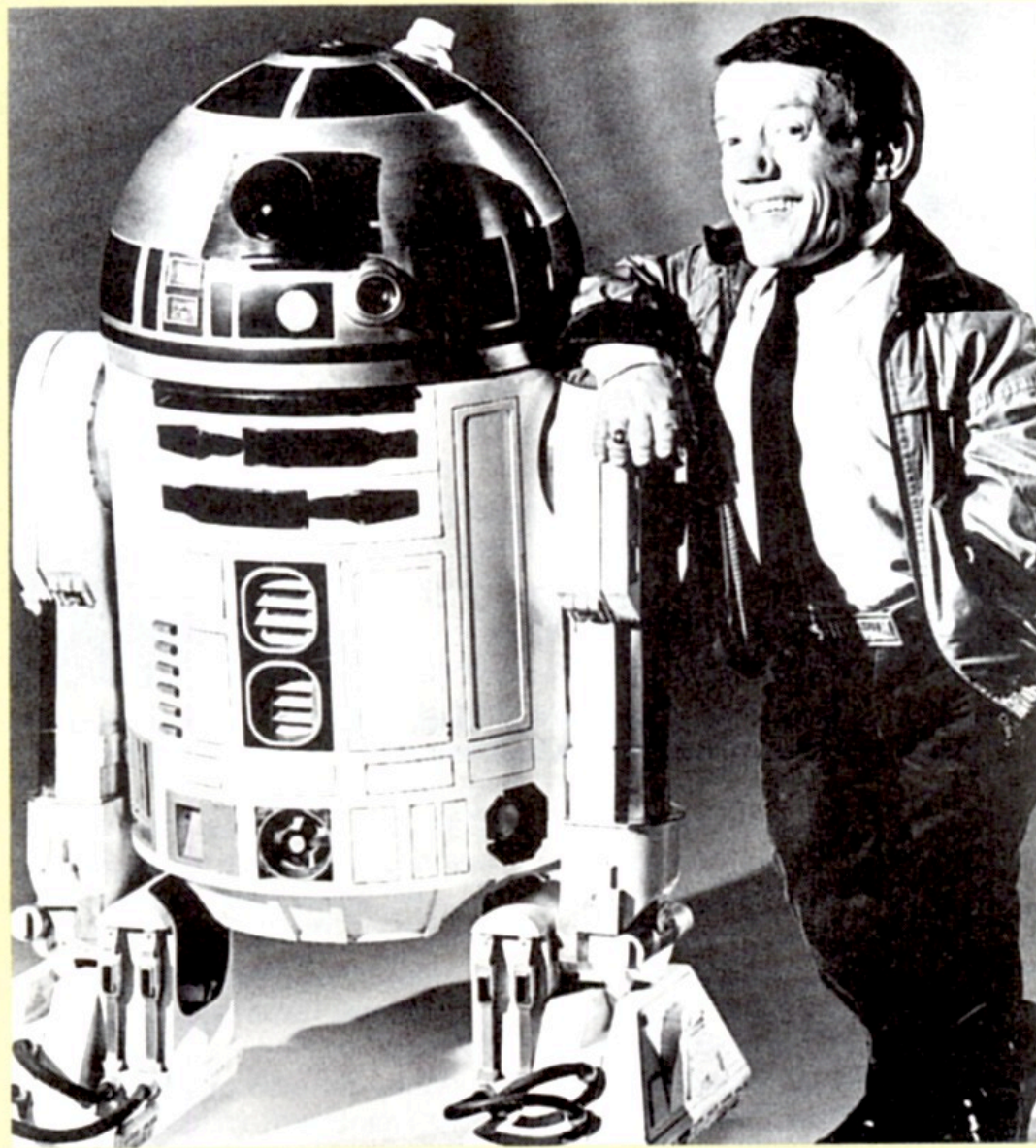
**O**f all the actors who appeared in STAR WARS, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, and RETURN OF THE JEDI, only a few have been signed up to appear in the new round of prequels. Among them is Kenny Baker, who will reprise his role as the galaxy's favorite droid, R2-D2. With the unbelievably intense level of secrecy surrounding the new movie, Baker isn't saying much about his return to the STAR WARS saga, although his scenes were completed months ago for THE PHANTOM MENACE, which is due out in May.

"It's a trade secret, like in any business," Baker explained at a Wizard World convention in Chicago. "We cannot give away the secrets, or else we'll be cutting our throats."

Even though he's mum about the new STAR WARS films—secrecy agreements all the cast members were forced to sign made sure of that—the 64-year-old Baker is happy to talk about his previous STAR WARS exploits, as well as his other film credits, which include Terry Gilliam's TIME BANDITS, Jim Henson's LABYRINTH and the Oscar-winning AMADEUS.

Fans often ask the diminutive Baker what it was like to fit inside R2-D2 for a day of filming. He compared the experience to working inside a trash can. "It was claustrophobic," he said. "It was hot, uncomfortable, and painful at times. But eventually I got used to it, and it was like home away from home."

One of the things that made the STAR WARS films so wonderful



Kenny Baker appears outside the shell of the galaxy's most famous diminutive droid, R2-D2. Baker essays the role once again, in THE PHANTOM MENACE.

for filmgoers was the incredible set designs. A favorite of Baker's was the layout for Dagobah, the primordial home of Yoda the Jedi master. "It was an amazing set," he said. "It was a big tray full of horrible water and snakes and frogs. You'd swear you were in a swamp."

It might be a shock to some STAR WARS fanatics that R2-D2 wasn't Baker's favorite role. Fidget in TIME BANDITS gets that hon-

or. "It was just more fun to make," Baker said of the imaginative film. "Terry Gilliam's enthusiasm is great."

Baker, who also played Paploo the Ewok in JEDI, is thrilled that the STAR WARS phenomenon is still going strong, and that several generations of fans still support him and the other actors at their "Men Behind the Masks" appearances. "I'm surprised it's lasted so long," he said. **Russell Lissau**

## CAST & CREW

by Frank Garcia

Both newcomers and seasoned pros earned acclaim on the STAR WARS films. Here's a rundown of what many of them are up to today.

### Mark Hamill

(Luke Skywalker)

After the SW trilogy, Hamill has remained active as an actor in a wide range of platforms. He has appeared on stage as AMADEUS and THE ELEPHANT MAN. He has been the voice of The Joker in BATMAN THE ANIMATED SERIES and has contributed his vocal talents to other animated series. He was Col. Christopher Blair in the Wing Commander CD-ROMs. Close to his heart is a comic book titled THE BLACK PEARL, from a screenplay with his cousin and partner, Eric Johnson. Hamill has also guest starred in THE FLASH (1990) and THE OUTER LIMITS (1996).

### Harrison Ford

(Han Solo)

Ford's career changed forever as a result of the SW trilogy. He is now one of the most popular actors in contemporary cinema. Starring in the INDIANA JONES trilogy in the 1980s for George Lucas and Steven Spielberg made him a rich man and a household name. He garnered an Oscar nomination for WITNESS (1985) and critical acclaim for starring in THE FUGITIVE (1993) and AIR FORCE ONE (1997). His latest film was SIX DAYS, SEVEN NIGHTS with Anne Heche. He's married to Melissa Mathison who wrote E.T. (1982).

### Carrie Fisher

(Princess Leia)

Fisher has made 24 TV and feature films since STAR WARS in 1977, notably THE BLUES BROTHERS (1980), HANNAH AND HER SISTERS (1986), and WHEN HARRY MET SALLY (1989). Today, she's an acclaimed author with three novels. Her first book, *Postcards from the Edge* (1990), was made into a film starring Meryl Streep. She's also one of Hollywood's hottest script doctors. Her uncredited handiwork is on such blockbusters as LETHAL WEAPON 3, HOOK, OUTBREAK, and THE WEDDING SINGER. Currently, she's working on a screenplay of her book *Surrender the Pink*.



A versatile, underrated actor, Mark Hamill continues to work on stage and screen since playing Luke in STAR WARS.

## Anthony Daniels

(C-3PO)

A British actor with mime training, Daniels has remained very busy in the SW universe. In addition to recreating the voice of C-3PO for all three of the National Public Radio productions of the SW trilogy, Daniels voiced the character for the animated series DROIDS (1985). He has also appeared in YOUNG INDIANA JONES CHRONICLES' TV movie "Attack of the Hawkmen" directed by Ben Burt. And he has narrated audiobook adaptations of Star Wars novels. In EPISODE ONE: THE PHANTOM MENACE, he reprises his role as C-3PO.

## Sir Alec Guinness

(Obi-wan Kenobi)

Considered one of the finest actors of his generation, thanks to Ealing comedies and to dramatic work for David Lean, Guinness brought a stamp of respectable authority to his role in the SW trilogy. He went on to work with Lean again on A PASSAGE TO INDIA (1984), appeared in the Dickens adaptation LITTLE DORRIT (1988), and showed up in Steven Soderbergh's KAFKA (1991). In his autobiographical *A Positively Final Appearance*, he did not wax enthusiastic on the subject of SW: "...a refurbished STAR WARS is on somewhere or everywhere. I have no intention of re-visiting any galaxy. I shrivel inside each time it is mentioned. Twenty years ago, when the film was first shown, it had a

freshness; also a sense of moral good and fun. Then I began to be uneasy at the influence it might be having." Regarding a child who had seen the film numerous times, he added, "...I just hope the lad...is not living in a fantasy world of secondhand, childish banalities."

## Peter Cushing

(Grand Moff Tarkin)

After a long and illustrious film career, beginning with THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK (1939), encompassing several brilliant performances as Baron Frankenstein, and ending with BIGGLES: ADVENTURES IN TIME (1986), Cushing died of cancer in 1994 at the age of 81. His many appearances included horror and fantasy classic films such as CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1956), THE HORROR OF DRACULA (1958), and THE MUMMY (1959).

## James Earl Jones

(the voice of Darth Vader)

For someone who used to have a stuttering problem, Jones has done very well, with a long and distinguished Hollywood career that continues today. After JEDI he was the enemy in CONAN THE BARBARIAN (1982). He was Admiral Greer in three Tom Clancy film adaptations: THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER (1990), PATRIOT GAMES (1992) and CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER (1994). He is known throughout the world as the "voice of CNN."

## Billy Dee Williams

(Lando Calrissian)

Williams is a busy Hollywood actor with 45 feature or TV movies in his credits. After EMPIRE and JEDI, he continued to work in variety of films and TV projects, including BATMAN (1989) as District Attorney Harvey Dent. He's appeared in two mini-series, CHIEFS (1983) with Charlton Heston, and HEAVEN & HELL: NORTH & SOUTH, BOOK III (1994). He had a recurring role in DYNASTY (1984-1986) and in LONESOME DOVE—THE SERIES (1992).

## Frank Oz

(Yoda)

Known to fans as Miss Piggy from THE MUPPETS, Oz is also a film producer and director. He produced three of the Muppet feature films: MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL (1992), MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND (1996) and THE GREAT MUPPET CAPER (1981). He directed the musical LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS (1986), the comedy WHAT ABOUT BOB? (1991) with Richard Dreyfuss, and THE INDIAN IN THE CUPBOARD (1995). In THE PHANTOM MENACE, he returns as Yoda.

## Ian McDiarmid

(The Emperor)

A graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in England, McDiarmid is primarily a stage actor who has completed a

number of visible television and film roles. He was in DRAGONSLAYER (1981) as Brother Jacobus. He was in YOUNG INDIANA JONES CHRONICLES' "Paris, October 1916," scripted by Carrie Fisher, allegedly as Indiana Jones' uncle. He was also directed by Yoda himself, Frank Oz, in DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS (1988). In THE PHANTOM MENACE, he reprises his JEDI role as Senator Palpatine.

## Ralph McQuarrie

(Production Illustrator)

With a series of beautiful concept paintings, McQuarrie helped George Lucas visualize and "sell" THE STAR WARS to 20th Century Fox executives. In the post-Star Wars era, he contributed his imaginative talents to CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (1977), STAR TREK: TMP (1979) and won an Oscar for his work on COCOON (1985). Recently, he returned to that "galaxy far, far away" by illustrating two books: a "pop-up" book about Tatooine and the *Illustrated Star Wars Universe* written by Kevin J. Anderson.

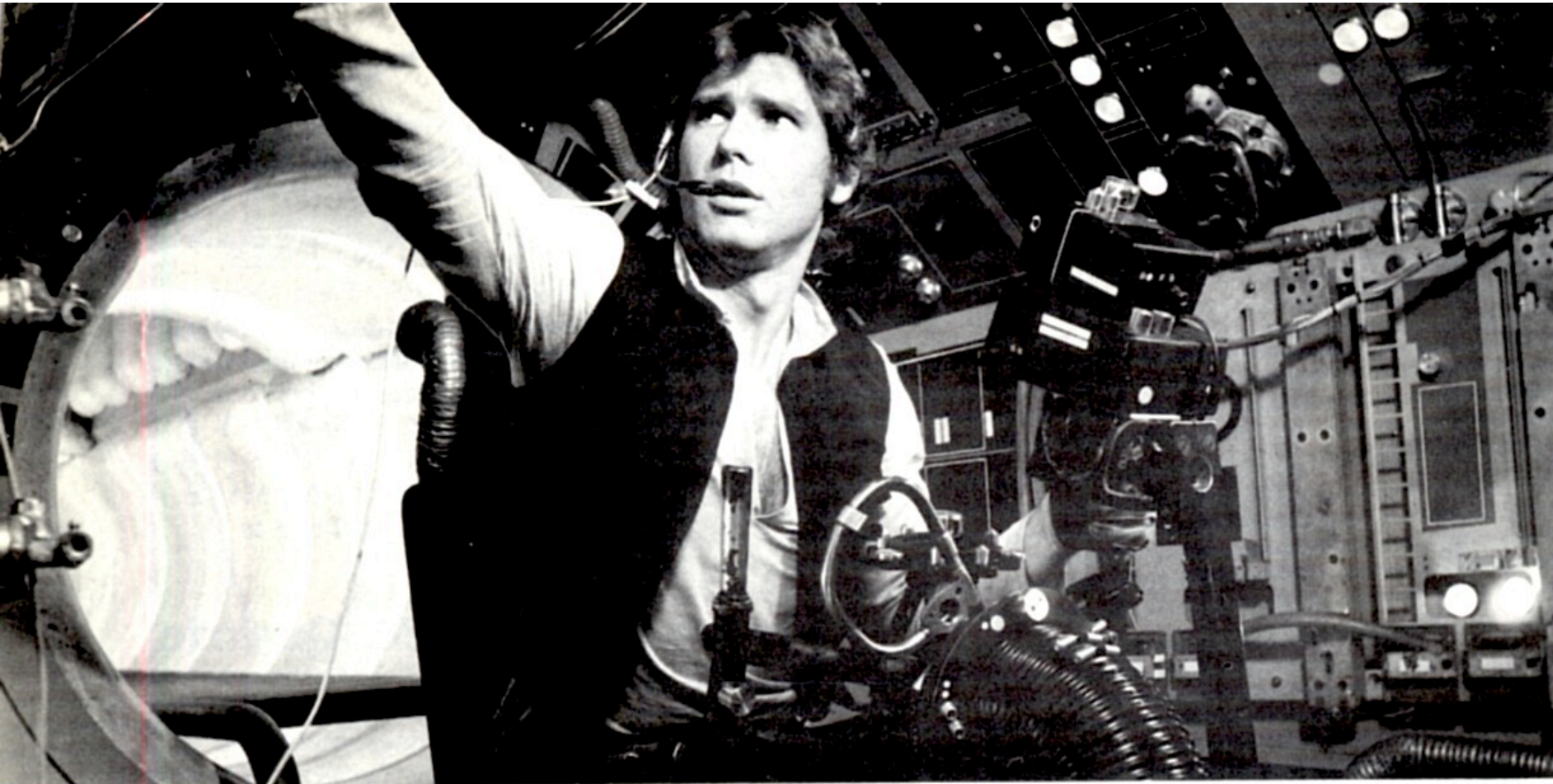
## Phil Tippett

(Stop Motion Animation)

The man responsible for that little holographic chess game aboard the Millennium Falcon between R2-D2 and Chewbacca is now one of Hollywood's most experienced special effects artists. His work has been displayed in DRAGONSLAYER (1981), ROBOCOP (1987), INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM (1984), and JURASSIC PARK (1993). With the advent of digital special effects, he now designs creatures and directs creature movements, as in DRAGONHEART (1996) and STARSHIP TROOPERS (1997).

C-3PO's Anthony Daniels continues to be involved in the STAR WARS universe, appearing in the new film.





Of all the actors in STARS WARS, Harrison Ford is the one to become a bona fide big time Hollywood movie star.

## Ben Burt

(Special Dialogue & Sound SFX)

Hired to "record sounds" for SW, Burt won a special achievement Oscar for groundbreaking sound effects that gave voices to R2-D2 and Chewbacca. Later, he garnered another Oscar for sound on *INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE* (1989). He directed the IMAX film *SPECIAL EFFECTS: ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN* (1995) which documented, in part, the making of the SW Special Edition films. In *THE PHANTOM MENACE*, he supplies new sound effects and editing.

## John Williams

(Composer)

Williams was a respected film and TV composer before SW. Afterward, he scored the *INDIANA JONES* trilogy. He has the distinction of scoring almost all of Spielberg's films including *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, E.T.*, and *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN*. John has scored over 75 films and won five Oscars. In *THE PHANTOM MENACE*, he returns to that galaxy "far, far away."

## Stuart Freeborn

(Makeup designer)

Freeborn is one of England's most respected makeup designers. He's worked on many classic films such as *BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI* (1957) *DR. STRANGELOVE* (1964) and *2001* (1968). After SW, he worked on the *SUPERMAN* films (1978) and (1980). Now in his eighties, he has retired from feature films.

## John Dykstra

(Special Effects Supervisor)

Because of his photographic innovations, the special effects camera that helped make STAR

WARS successful was dubbed the "Dykstraflex." Immediately after winning an Oscar for Best Visual Effects, he was hired by television producer Glen A. Larson to create the visual effects for *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA* (1978). Later, he helped save *STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE* (1979) by joining forces with colleague Douglas Trumbull to create the films' visual effects. He continued to refine his craft with such films as *LIFEFORCE* (1985) and *INVADERS FROM MARS* (1986). His most recent credits are *BATMAN FOREVER* (1995) and *BATMAN & ROBIN* (1997).

## Richard Edlund

(Miniature and Optical Effects)

After *JEDI*, Edlund provided visual effects for at least 19 films. In 1983, he set up his own facility, Boss Films, in Marina Del Rey, and produced effects for *2010* (1984), *GHOSTBUSTERS* (1985), *POLTERGEIST II: THE OTHER SIDE* (1985), *DIE HARD* (1988), *GHOST* (1990), *ALIEN 3* (1992) and *AIR FORCE ONE* (1997). In August 1997, he was forced to shut down Boss Films.

## Gary Kurtz

(Producer, SW & ESB)

After ESB, Gary produced *THE DARK CRYSTAL* (1982), directed by Frank Oz, and then he took us on a *RETURN TO OZ* (1985), before diving into the *SLIPSTREAM* (1989) with Mark Hamill. Gary's latest producing credit was *THE STEAL* (1994).

## Irvin Kershner

(Director, ESB)

After *EMPIRE*, Kershner helped Sean Connery return to the role that made him famous as 007

in the "renegade" James Bond production, *NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN* (1983). He directed a 1985 episode of *AMAZING STORIES*, "Hell Toupee," for Steven Spielberg. More recently, he directed *ROBOCOP 2* (1990) and the two-hour television pilot of *SEAQUEST* in 1993.

## Lawrence Kasdan

(Screenwriter ESB & RoJ)

His directorial debut, *BODY HEAT* (1981), became a hit, followed by *THE BIG CHILL* (1983), *SILVERADO* (1985), *THE ACCIDENTAL TOURIST* (1988), *GRAND CANYON* (1991) and *THE BODYGUARD* (1992). His latest film is *MUMFORD* (1999).

## Richard Marquand

(Director, RoJ)

After *JEDI*, Marquand filmed *UNTIL SEPTEMBER* (1984), a romantic drama with Karen Allen, then *JAGGED EDGE* (1985), a courtroom drama with Jeff Bridges. Sadly, *HEART'S EDGE* in 1987 was his final film. He died in September 1987.

## Dennis Muren

(Miniature and Optical Effects)

A winner of six Oscars, Muren continues to push the envelope in the visual effects field. Having worked on a total of 14 films, he shares Oscars with his colleagues for *E.T.* (1982), *INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM* (1984), *THE ABYSS* (1989), and *TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY* (1991). Most notably, he helped bring the dinosaurs alive in *JURASSIC PARK* (1993) and *THE LOST WORLD: JURASSIC PARK* (1997). His work for Lucasfilm continues in *THE PHANTOM MENACE*. □

**A**ttention, George Lucas: Darth Vader wants an apology. First you had the nerve to kill him, and to make matters worse, when you finally unmasked him, it wasn't even his real face. So you've got to understand why Vader—or at least David Prowse, the actor who portrayed the Dark Lord of the Sith in the first STAR WARS trilogy—is a trifle miffed.

"I've always felt it was a real dirty stunt," the 63-year-old Prowse said. "I've never, ever forgiven them for that. There was no need for that at all."

That's not to say the STAR WARS experience has soured for Prowse, who has been touring the world with several of his former co-stars as part of the "Men Behind the Masks" tour (*see page 16*). Prowse loves the renewed publicity, much of which is the result of the re-release of the original trilogy and the anticipation for the upcoming prequels. "Everything went quiet for a while, from the mid-1980s to, like, 1993," he said. "Then it started to pick up slowly, and then there was the re-release, and it's been tremendous ever since."

Prowse thoroughly enjoys meeting fans, young and old alike. Despite his on-screen persona as the universe's meanest bad guy, as well as the fact that at 6-feet, 6-inches, he's quite an imposing figure, Prowse is ever the polite Englishman. He especially likes meeting enthusiastic fans in their late twenties who saw the films when they first came out, people who treat him like a screen idol. "I'm amazed by it, to be perfectly honest," Prowse said. "I'm honored."

It's a credit to STAR WARS that a science-fiction film made 20 years ago is a viable franchise, and that people who didn't even see the pictures the first time around are so crazy about the characters. Prowse is quick to explain what he believes to be the secret of the trilogy's success.

"It's a combination of a whole variety of different things," he said. "You had a first-class story, likable characters and sensational special effects, and it was in a futuristic setting. And it came at the right time." The simplistic good-versus-evil plot, reminiscent of the adventure serials and swash-buckling pirate films of the 1930s and '40s, was key. "It was like good cowboys vs. bad cowboys," Prowse said. "You always knew exactly what was going on."

STAR WARS wasn't Prowse's first acting gig, but it certainly is his most famous. He appeared as the monster in Hammer Films'

# STAR WARS

## DAVID PROWSE

*Darth Vader, Dark Lord of the Sith, un.masks to meet his grateful public.*



David Prowse (left, with Alec Guinness) reveals the face that George Lucas kept hidden in the STAR WARS trilogy.

HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN and FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL. He also can be seen in A CLOCKWORK ORANGE and JABBERWOCKY. Before his film career, he was a bodybuilder and weightlifting champion who was recognized as Britain's Strongest Man, a title he held from 1965 to 1970. In the 1970s, he even trained Christopher Reeve for his starring role in SUPERMAN. Prowse is still in fantastic shape, despite arthritis that has troubled him since childhood and a pair of hip replacements that were needed after a weightlifting accident in 1988. In fact, Prowse used his star power to create "Dave Prowse's

Force Against Arthritis," a foundation that raises money for arthritis research and the care of people who suffer from the disease.

He doesn't let the pain get in the way of his public appearances. When one of his hips was especially bad last year, he showed up on crutches. He knows that the least he can do is sign his name for fans who sometimes travel hundreds of miles to meet him. "I love these shows; I really do," Prowse said. "What more could you wish for than a convention like this when people queue up for hours, tell you how good your work was and throw money at you?"

Prowse hasn't been able to

learn any detail about the prequels from fellow tour-member Kenny Baker, but then this kind of secrecy has been around since THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. "After STAR WARS, they got paranoid about secrecy," Prowse recalled. "We never got copies of the script—we only had our pages."

The level of mystery was so high during EMPIRE that Prowse didn't even have the real dialogue for the famous scene in which Vader reveals to Luke Skywalker that the young Jedi-in-training is his son. The admission that shocked millions of filmgoers was dubbed in during post-production. "I didn't actually know I was Luke Skywalker's father until I saw it in

the cinema," Prowse said.

Even though we hear James Earl Jones' voice when Vader speaks, Prowse's powerful, dramatic movements contributed to the character's reputation as a great screen heavy. His sweeping gestures, strong stride and clenched fists were deliberately created to show Vader's emotions, even though audiences couldn't see his face. "Darth Vader is a very physical character, and I've always been a physical actor," Prowse said. "I have this ability to convey emotions through body movement. I don't need dialogue—I don't need facial expressions."

Prowse said he would like Vader to be remembered in the years to come as the silver screen's most likeable villain. "I think that's the case, because Darth Vader is the villain you love to hate," he explained. "He was a villain who had likeable qualities about him."

That doesn't mean Prowse is happy with Vader's redemption at the end of JEDI. "He never, ever should have turned to good," Prowse fumed. "And killing him off was the worst idea ever. He was such a dynamic character that they could've been writing stories about him forever. I'm eternally grateful for everything Lucasfilm did for me, but it could have been even more sensational."

Prowse said he was kept in the dark during the filming of JEDI about Vader's death, as well as the infamous unmasking scene, which featured another actor, Sebastian Shaw, instead of Prowse. "In RETURN OF THE JEDI, they were doing everything they could not to use me," he said. "They kept using my stunt double." He wishes he could have been inside the suit when Mark Hamill removed Vader's menacing mask. "It would have been the icing on the cake, having played Darth Vader for seven years. I just think they went about it in a very underhanded manner, and it left a very sour taste in my mouth."

Despite his unhappiness over Vader's demise, Prowse said he'd love to return to that galaxy far, far away. Fans are expecting Anakin Skywalker to fall prey to the Dark Side of the Force and turn into Darth Vader in Episode II or Episode III, and they're going to need someone to fit inside the heavy black suit again.

"I'd love to reprise the role," he said. "Nothing would give me greater pleasure. And I think for some reason if they don't offer me the Darth Vader role, the fans would object. I think they would revolt. They're a very loyal crowd." **Russell Lissau**

# STAR WARS

## THE MEN BEHIND THE MASKS

*Unseen actors unmask for their fans.*

By Russell Lissau

There he is, just a few feet away. The most feared bounty hunter in the galaxy. The most ruthless manhunter ever born. Just the name itself makes knees buckle, foreheads bead up with sweat and blaster hands shake: Boba Fett. And now we're face to face. I approach. Cautiously. "Hi. Could you please autograph this 8x10 for me? Make it out to Russell." That's right, space travelers. Boba Fett has sold out.

Of course, it's not really Fett. The man scrawling his name with a gold-ink pen before a line of a hundred fans at a recent comic book convention is really Jeremy Bulloch, the actor who donned Fett's Mandalorian battle armor in *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* and *RETURN OF THE JEDI*. Bulloch and several of his less-recognizable co-stars from the *STAR WARS* trilogy—including Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca), David Prowse (Darth Vader), Anthony Daniels (C-3PO), Kenny Baker (R2-D2), and Warwick Davis (Wicket the Ewok)—have been touring the nation for months as *The Men Behind the Masks*.

Thanks to the never-ending popularity of the *STAR WARS* films, as well as the overwhelming success of the 20th anniversary versions of the movies, the cast members often appear in various combinations at comic-book and science-fiction conventions, where they happily greet fans, sign hundreds

**Jeremy Bulloch, who played bounty hunter Boba Fett in the *STAR WARS* trilogy, poses with two look-alikes at a recent comic book convention.**



**Actor David Prowse makes a personal appearance accompanied by his alter ego, Darth Vader.**

of autographs, and pose for pictures, making a buck where they can. The *Men Behind the Masks* tour was put together by the people at Icons Authentic Replicas, a California firm that sells prop reproductions and collectible miniatures like lightsabers, X-wing fighters, and memorabilia from other science fiction films. As with most celebrity public appearances, the actors get a fee up front and get paid per autograph. Plenty of glossy 8x10 photographs and actions figures are for sale at a nearby table, too, for those fans who forgot to bring their favorite *STAR WARS* knick-knacks to the show. Lucasfilm isn't very involved with the 'Masks' effort, especially since George Lucas is putting his energy into the new *STAR WARS* films. But the company has given the tour its blessing. Officials say they're delighted the actors are out meeting their fans. "We're real happy, and they seem to really enjoy it," said Lucasfilm spokeswoman Jeanne Cole from the company headquarters in San Rafael, California. "It's definitely something that's really important to the fans. And anything that can keep

our fans excited is good news for us—where would we be without the fans?"

At the Chicago Comicon, Bulloch was joined on the 'Men Behind the Masks' dais by Prowse and Mayhew. Baker was supposed to be in Chicago, too, but he had to skip the gig because of a more important engagement: working on the upcoming *STAR WARS* prequel, *THE PHANTOM MENACE*. "Anthony Daniels and Warwick Davis are involved, too, but that's kind of hush-hush," someone said at the time, although it has been common knowledge among fans for some time the two droids will appear in all the *STAR WARS* films. Bulloch and Mayhew, meanwhile, are happy to take short breaks during a marathon autograph session to talk about what it's like having played two of the most-recognized characters in science-fiction history—roles that have become international icons—while they themselves are all but anonymous. Bulloch, for one, is thrilled with the attention. A native Englishman who has been an actor since he dropped out of school at age 11, Bulloch also has appeared in several episodes of *DOCTOR WHO* and three

James Bond films as Q's assistant. But none of his other films has generated so much interest in a character he's played, as evidence by the numerous fan websites posted in the masked man's honor. If you ever wondered about all the secret gadgets in Fett's armor, where the mystery man came from or why braided Wookiee scalps hang off his shoulder, one of these sites surely will tell you. "It's bizarre," Bulloch says of Fett's growing fan base. "I don't know why he's so popular. It was just four lines, five lines. It is the fewest lines I've ever had as an actor! But," he said, pausing, "the costume is cool." As he finishes the thought, almost on cue, two fans dressed in homemade (but still very impressive) Mandalorian armor arrive at the signing area. They approach their hero silently, the crowd parting in awe as they walk up to Bulloch. He eats it up like candy. "That's cool," he says, grinning. "We must have a photo op."

Bulloch said he wouldn't be disappointed if George Lucas doesn't come calling for





Above: The name is familiar, but the face... Darth Vader welcomes fans to the Men Behind the Masks tour, which showcased the actors whose faces you didn't see. Below: (l to r) Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca), Warwick Davis (Wicket the Ewok), Kenny Baker (R2D2), Jeremy Bulloch (Boba Fett), and David Prowse (Darth Vader).



**“It’s wonderful. There’s more reaction this time than before. You’ve got a new generation of fans, and there’s more money and more interest.”**

—Peter Mayhew, Chewbacca—

Boba Fett to make an appearance in the upcoming STAR WARS prequels. There’s definitely room for the character, however: depending on whose version of STAR WARS history you believe, the Mandalorian warriors fought for the Empire during the Clone Wars. Rumors floating through cyberspace already say Fett will appear in at least one of the new films. “Who knows?” Bulloch shrugs. “It would be nice. But if not, I had a wonderful time on the last two.”

Peter Mayhew might be the only man behind the mask who actually resembles the character he played in STAR WARS. With bushy hair and mustache, it’s easy to see how the 7-foot, three-inch Mayhew could be transformed into everyone’s favorite Wookiee. Mayhew is far more gentle than his hot-tempered alter-ego, however. No matter how many people are in line, he greets every one cordially, chit-chats a little bit, and signs whatever piece of memorabilia they present. Most of the items he’s handed are photographs or action figures; a few fans have brought copies of the limited-edition STAR WARS Monopoly board game. One fan, far too young to have ever seen the STAR WARS films during their initial run, politely asked Mayhew and the other actors to sign his Darth Vader Halloween costume. “I’m never going to wear this again,” the boy said as he walked away with his marvelous prize. “I don’t want to ruin it.”

“Look!” Mayhew exclaimed, opening his long arms to gesture at the fans. “This is at a comic book convention. And the reaction here is only a small percentage of the national reaction.” Like Bulloch, Mayhew is pleased to be a part of the renewed hubbub over STAR WARS. “I love the attention. I could go and do this forever,” he said. “It’s absolutely wonderful. There’s more reaction this time than there was the first time. You’ve got a new generation of fans, and there’s more money around. There’s totally more interest.” Mayhew thinks he knows why, too. “Because there hasn’t been anything like it since 1983,” he said with confidence, “since the release of JEDI.” And what happens if Lucasfilm tries to trot them all out again in three decades for the 50th anniversary? “I should be there, no problem,” Mayhew said with an earnest smile, sticking out his large right hand for yet another shake. □

# THE 13

## Time catches up with '60s



*By Chuck Wagner*

With *THE 13TH FLOOR*, Josef Rusnak completes an odyssey from German film school to Hollywood director with a genre movie to his credit. But Rusnak did not grow up dreaming of making science fiction movies; his association with film began almost by accident.

"Originally, my film interest was in doing documentaries. I was studying in Mu-

nich, having moved out of my hometown, Pforzheim, at 18. I was studying German literature, history and a bit of philosophy. After two years or so, in my class there was this girl—there's always a girl! She told me about this film school, and she knew somebody, and he made it happen. I met this guy, and it turned out to be the man who, ten years later, became the director of photography for Roland Emmerich! This is how I got into the Munich Film School, the same school where everyone in Germany went: Wim Wenders and Roland, etc."

Rusnak's first film, *COLD FEVER*, won the German film award for Best Direction in 1984. "I always used to write the movies I do. That's what you learn in the Munich Film School. No one would write anything for anyone except for himself. I wrote my first feature when I was 22. That was at the end of film school. I got some financing together, and I won. It got released in Germany and was sold all over the world. Not too bad for a start! Then I went on to do some French and Italian TV, adaptations of novels, that kind of thing. *13TH FLOOR* is really my fourth feature, and my first real genre film. All the others were a European mixture of genre and private, creative experiences you can have with genres."

One of those films, a comic piece called *PICNIC AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE*, teamed Rusnak with actor Armin Mueller-Stahl, with whom he worked on *13TH FLOOR*. "It was the last feature done in Berlin before the Wall came down. Mueller-Stahl was one of my leads. This is how I met him. The film was a black comedy on the spy genre, but not a true genre film. We were playing with the genre."

And the path that brought Rusnak to *13TH FLOOR*? "I met Roland Emmerich a long time ago—1982 or something. When I attended film school, the production manager of the film school was looking for students to work on Roland's film, which he did in a co-production with the film school. I ended up becoming the gaffer in Roland's high school movie! And that's how we met for the first time."

They bumped into each other on other



**Top:** Vincent D'Onofrio about to enter the virtual reality world of *THE 13TH FLOOR*. **Middle:** Josef Rusnak directs D'Onofrio as a character in the VR world. **Bottom:** Armin Mueller-Stahl enjoys the pleasure of the film's 1937 alternate reality.

# 13TH FLOOR

## sci-fi concept.

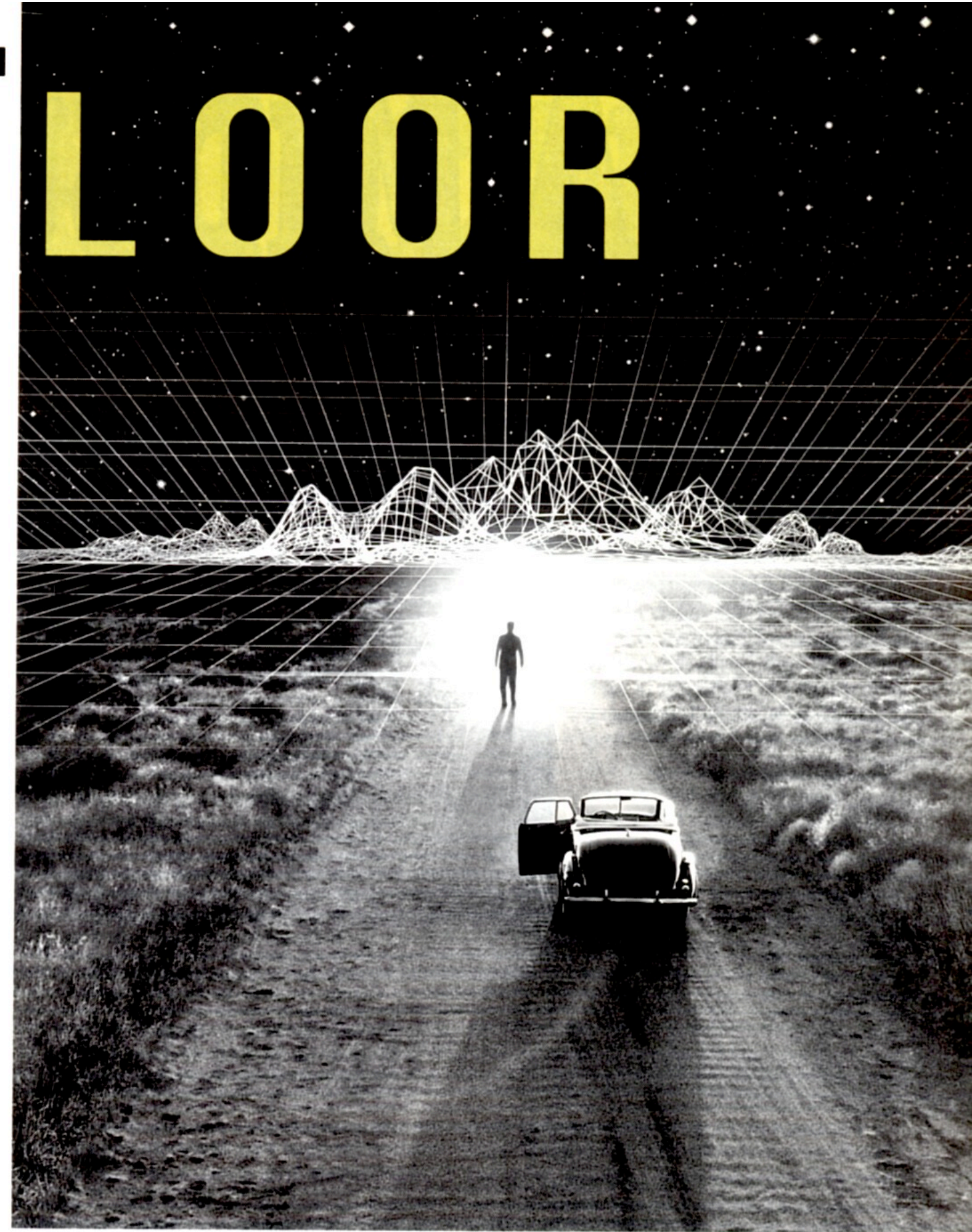
occasions, but nothing quite clicked. "We started to develop two scripts, but always the production of one of his movies came in between," said Rusnak. "While I was waiting for him to get back from *STARGATE*, I started to work on other projects. I went back to Germany and shot a couple of TV productions and then came back to L.A. again. Then we talked about another genre film—more along the line of a science fiction thriller. And those days, there was a lot of virtual reality buzz going on. Both of us knew this novel out of the '60s called *Simulcrum 3*. It features a most convincing story outline to the subject of VR. In it, you have a hero who realizes on his search during a murder mystery, that his own world is a computer generated simulation."

In the early '70s, Rainer Werner Fassbender had done a German TV series called *WORLD ON THE WIRE* based on the same novel. "It was a dialog-y TV series, with Fassbender's good points, but it was nothing like a feature film—a huge, international feature film—would require. And Fassbender's emphasis was to basically reproduce the whole novel, instead of really working on the idea."

And the idea was ahead of its time. Recall that computer chips were invented in the 1960s and any real power to perform VR operations and the Internet lay well in the future. "Nobody even could think about the spread of the information superhighway with PCs in each home. So the book was really science fiction out of a completely new environment. In the '90s when you read this novel, it read like an incredible, prescient piece of drama. There is no science fiction anymore. All the details are out there. This guy wrote the novel in 1963, and in it there's a computer simulation where they call their characters 'ID units.' All the ID units were stored in 'memory drums.'"

Using the novel as the controlling idea, Rusnak modified the existing script—the original script adaptation was by Ravel Centano-Rodriguez—concerning a murder mystery which becomes embroiled in the machinations of a parallel universe contained in computers. The parallel universe is set in 1937.

"Roland and I spent a year and a half figuring out how the story could be skimmed down and all these characters—the author used 15-18 characters to tell his story—re-



The film explores the possibility of computer-simulated universes, where people only believe they are real.

duced. This story takes place in two time frames, the '90s and 1937. To go to the 1937 world, you hook your consciousness up with the computer, and you start to live in a character which this computer stores. It's somewhat like playing a kill-thrill video game, where after you kill the two tanks or 20 beings or whatever, you forget about everything around you and start to become the character, Terminator 3 or 4 or whatever. In this computer simulation in the film, you have not just five or six characters to pick from; you have thousands. And the characters in this simulation are not aware that they are artificially-created characters. They have a life of their own."

On set, the actors allowed that they were intrigued by the script. And handling actors is yet another skill that directors learn, whatever their schooling. "You're trained," Rusnak allowed, "but mainly you're trained by doing. I remember very well the times

when, after the second shooting day, your actor doesn't show up anymore because he thinks you're a prick! You have to go through a certain pain to find a way to deal with and work with actors."

But Rusnak had no such problems with his *13TH FLOOR* cast. "This is almost a philosophy of Centropolis. You spend so much time of your life shooting a movie and dealing with a movie, you want to work with people you enjoy working with. Craig Bierko, Gretchen Mol, Armin Mueller-Stahl and Dennis Haysbert loved the script and they had a lot of respect for the script. And if it happens that the director is part of the script process, that makes it very easy. You don't have to prove that you're able to do certain things. And Roland was involved emotionally in the whole process (even if *Godzilla* took a lot of his time). I worked with Roland for one and a half years just on the treatment to make it right." □

# A MIDSUMMER

## An all-star cast brings a little modern

By Douglas Eby

In Shakespeare's *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*, Hermia (Anna Friel) and Lysander (Dominic West) flee into a forest to escape Hermia's father, who wishes her to marry Demetrius (Christian Bale), who follows Hermia into the woods, and is followed in turn by Helena (Calista Flockhart), who adores Demetrius. The four characters find themselves at the secret home of the fairies, surrounded by water nymphs and satyrs. Then the trickster Puck (Stanley Tucci) gives the four a secret love potion that causes emotional chaos among them. A band of actors shows up to put on a play, which is interrupted when star actor Bottom (Kevin Kline) gets involved in battles between Oberon (Rupert Everett), King of the Fairies, and Titania, the Queen (Michelle Pfeiffer).

Filming a story by Shakespeare has been "endlessly, ridiculously, rewarding" said writer-director Michael Hoffman, who has chosen to retain the original language, except for a couple of "ad-libbed moments that were too good not to use." Hoffman has been developing his adaptation "for a long time" but not actively. "It's something I talked to Kevin Kline about years ago, just sort of in passing, when we were talking about Shakespeare and film, and I was arguing there's really not a way to make a movie of this play. But then a couple of years later I sat down, and in three weeks did this adaptation, and turned it into Fox and they green-lit it two weeks later. But I guess I'd been absorbing it, thinking it, for a long time before that."

There have been several films of the story: a 1935 version directed by Max Reinhardt, with James Cagney as Bottom, and Mickey Rooney as Puck; an early '70s attempt with Diana Rigg and David Warner; and a Miramax-financed filming of a popular Royal Shakespeare Company production a few years ago. "I think that movie just came out and went away," said Hoffman. "So I was very aware of the fact there were versions, and none of them had really



During a break in the filming of William Shakespeare's *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*, director Michael Hoffman talks with Kevin Kline, who plays Bottom.

worked. It's a play I know really well, from acting in it twice, and I've directed it a couple of times, and I thought a lot about why it was problematic. It's sort of organized like an essay about love. You don't have a main character like Macbeth, or a central relationship like Romeo and Juliet, that takes you through the story. This is a lot of people whose problems have parallels in the world, and it's all about love and transformation. But a film is hard to organize that way. An audience is much more demanding about having a clear point of view in a film than in theater, where you can organize a piece around ideas."

One solution to this challenge that Hoffman found was to expand the role of Bottom, one of a group of tradesmen known as the Mechanicals (from working with their hands) who meet to prepare a play for the wedding of a Duke, Theseus (David Strathairn). The group is lead by Quince the Carpenter, and includes Bottom the Weaver, Snug the Joiner, Flute the Bellows-mender, Snout the Tinker, and Starveling the Tailor. Hoffman says he created a story for Bottom (Kline) that "doesn't exist in the play, that produced some opportunities in terms of his relationship with Titania that I have never seen before. I think I've seen the play around 30 times. What I used are simple ideas, not grand ideas."

Regarding the film's setting, he noted,

"It's very important anytime you're dealing with fantasy, to try to keep it free of very specific time and place. So it is a kind of 19th century world, in a kind of Italy, but it is not the Italy of *THE LEOPARD* or the film 1900. Particularly because it's a time that is not so far away from us, it really had to feel free from history." But the characters do have clothing of that period, and ride bicycles. "One of the reasons I liked the late 19th century setting is that it is in part a lovers' story, who enter the forest and experience a peculiar transformation, coming out of it more mature and more fully formed, and that seemed to me to have a lot to do with conditioning and the subversion of conditioning. And I thought the

late Victorian clothing—the long sleeves, and high necks, the corsets, and the stiffness, and the way the clothes kind of wear the people—would be a good visual metaphor for the conditioning. And also, they can lose those clothes, and rip those clothes. The forest can sort of destroy those clothes, and that creates an opportunity for some kind of clear visual way to create this kind of rebirthing."

Hoffman's directing credits include *RESTORATION*, which had lush visuals, but this is a very different kind of film in that regard: "This movie is very beautiful, but the focus is more strongly on character, which I think is probably a good thing. Because you're in a forest at night for more than half the movie, as opposed to moving from palace to palace, it doesn't create quite the opportunity that a movie like *ELIZABETH* or *RESTORATION* does for sumptuousness. We built the entire forest on Fellini's old stage, and it was a huge set, although it doesn't feel huge. When you're shooting in real exteriors, you don't even think about the amount of space that you use. So even though we were on the biggest stage in Europe, it felt relatively small. But it created another level of artifice and theatricality. And the fairies are creating a kind of artifice all the time. They're the artists in the natural world, and are constantly forming and re-forming it. I think without the

# NIGHT'S DREAM

magic to Shakespeare's fantasy-comedy.

opportunity to be inside, and control the lighting and the look of the movie, it would have been a very hard thing to do."

The story also takes place in the "real" world, including a couple of palaces near Rome. "There are a lot of palaces in Europe that they will continue to furnish and try to create a sense of what they would have been, with big empty, painted rooms, and we could go in and actually dress in a relatively abstract way, which again helped to take it out of time. And we shot in a village in the south of Tuscany. The transitions were very often tough to figure out how to do, to get across from that real world, to the forest set, and back out of that set."

Another kind of transition in the film is the mix of humans, along with fantasy characters. "One of my strong feelings" Hoffman said, "and I don't know if this is right or wrong, is that I wanted there to be magic, obviously, but I think effects often militate against magic. Effects are the equivalent of if you lived in 1903, and went to the Chicago World's Fair, whenever it was, and looked at the wonders of technology. And that is a long way from magic. It's amazing, and inspiring and invigorating, but it doesn't have anything to do with magic. So we kept everything mechanical. The only time I really used effects were in moments when they're sort of thrown away. The CGI shots are not for the big moments. And I think, in retrospect, that that was a good choice, because it kind of takes you by surprise when there's some kind of effect. And because of that, I think it maintains a little bit more of the magic. I think if you'd gone in with a big effects budget, you actually might have destroyed the atmosphere of the forest."

One of the elements of fantasy is a character like Puck, and Hoffman noted that actor Stanley Tucci is "a very earthy person, in a way, a very unspritley person. And we sort of went that way; I mean, I sort of thought of the fairies as a band of gypsies. One of the reasons I chose Italy, when I first started doing the adaptation, was that I knew it would force me into a different idea about the forest, and the creatures in the forest, and avoid the kind of pointy-eared little man sitting under a toadstool." Consequently, Hoffman avoided using extensive special makeup on his cast. He also noted that Shakespeare makes references to a Greek play, Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, which has



Rupert Everett stars as Oberon, King of the Fairies, and Michelle Pfeiffer is Titania, his Queen.

fantasy characters like naiads and dryads, who are "much more what you'd imagine inhabiting an Italian wood, so it's more about satyrs and nymphs than about fairies."

One of Hoffman's previous films was *ONE FINE DAY*, also starring Michelle Pfeiffer, so it turned out to be fairly easy to attract her participation. On the other hand, Kline took a while to come to a decision: "When we first talked about it, Kevin talked about playing Oberon, and then I came up with this idea for Bottom, which made him more than just this kind of egotistical, comic blowhard. It took a lot of talking and convincing to get Kevin to do it, but then he called and said he had figured a way he could play Theseus, Oberon, and Bottom. Well, that's what Bottom is always doing, wanting to play everyone else's role. So I told him that it sounded like he'd already committed to playing Bottom, and he laughed. And then Michelle is a very brave and adventurous actress, and she always wants to try things, so I went to her with the script and she immediately wanted to do it. Then Calista I had known a long time. Most

people think of her as a television actress doing a sitcom [*ALLY MCBEAL*], but she's very well-trained, has done a lot of Shakespeare, and is really fantastic with the language. And Stanley [Tucci] is a great classical actor, and Rupert Everett has played Oberon a couple of times before."

Hoffman says he's been having a "great time" on this production and it "reminds you when you have material you can trust, that gives you an amazing amount of freedom and confidence. A lot of people feel a distance from Shakespeare, and one of the things I really wanted to have happen, and I think has happened, is to find the humanity at the bottom of it. Not that it's so hard to find, but film allows you to get close to characters that you'd otherwise see from a distance. And that had a funny effect on it; I mean, I don't know if it makes the material funnier, but it makes it warmer and 'realer,' and the comedy then comes more out of the characters. And I've been very heartened and pleased to hear people coming out of screenings saying they forget they were listening to Shakespeare. That's great—the actors really make it their own." □

# THE MUMMY, RESURRECTED

**Universal revives the long-dormant franchise from its Golden Era of horror.**

By Joe Fordham

Stephen Sommers knew that America had been chuckling at the Mummy for years. The cartoons of Gary Larson are just one example. Yet the Universal icon fascinated him since he first saw the Karloff original as a boy on late night TV. "Frankenstein I always felt sorry for. Dracula was kind of cool and sexy. But the Mummy was really creepy. The way they photographed Boris Karloff, never actually showing how he killed people—it really creped you out."

The image intrigued Sommers throughout years of rumblings in Hollywood about the old Egyptian's return. "I'd heard they'd been trying to make this movie for nine years," Sommers recalled. "Every time I'd check, they had a new director on it—I knew George Romero had been involved at some point and Joe Dante. Finally it fell apart once again, so I called up my friends at Universal and asked if I could pitch them my idea."

Writer-director Sommers recalled the strategy behind his initial pitch, for what has now become the biggest film of his career. "They showed me their previous script, which I had no interest in doing," Sommers recalled. "They were trying to do a remake of the original MUMMY, which I loved, but I didn't really want to do just a standard gothic horror movie. There have been so many of those,



For one of the film's RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK action scenes, Stephen Sommers (left) directs Brendan Fraser (far right) as the Indiana Jones-type hero.

like MARY REILLY or the Branagh FRANKENSTEIN, although I liked the Coppola DRACULA a lot. What I proposed was, basically, to do THE MUMMY as the big event movie. I wanted to do an epic, romantic adventure—and I also suggested we had to have Industrial Light and Magic create our Mummy. I didn't want a guy wrapped in bandages. I wanted to take a real human being and turn him into a corpse, then turn him from a corpse back into a human being."

Sommers had a past association with ILM visual effects supervisor John Burton, who had provided the digital sea

creatures for the climactic sequences of Sommers' previous film, DEEP RISING, and Sommers had been keen to share his plans for future projects. "One of them was THE MUMMY," said Burton. "I thought it would be really great to get involved because of the potential for updating a classic like that into something that was reflective of the technology that we have for making visual effects now."

Sommers and Burton were quick to agree that a truly frightening modern Mummy would require a cutting-edge digital approach, if only to counteract the obvious baggage the ancient Egyptian brought

with him. "We wanted to make sure that our Mummy wasn't what everyone expected," Burton continued. "If you tossed this idea around town you'd have people saying you could easily out-run them, or why not just tear their arms off? That was always a problem. We really wanted to create something that would be frightening and dangerous, something that you'd never seen before. We wanted to create a photo-realistic living corpse that was obviously not a man in a suit, obviously not an animatronic, and obviously alive."

"Generally speaking," Sommers explained, "I'm bored with straight prosthetics, when they build a guy's head out and then they remove part [of it]; everybody knows it's fake. I wanted to do it digitally so that when the Mummy woke up he could walk towards you and you could clearly see it's not a puppet, and it's not a guy in a suit because we can see through his ribs and through holes in his head."

Having established the tone and the scope of their story, and having obtained sufficient interest in the technical approach towards their title character, producer Jim Jacks and his co-producer Sean Daniel at Alphaville Productions began to plot logistics and assemble key members of their crew. Other return players from earlier Sommers' productions included film editor Bob Ducsay, who cut Sommers' directorial debut, CATCH ME



Above: High priest Imhotep (Arnold Vosloo) is mummified alive for trying to revive his beloved princess from the dead. Below: Since the old bandage-wrapped Mummy was deemed insufficient to scare contemporary audiences, the film has the risen Imhotep inflict Biblical-style plagues (in this case, flies), courtesy of ILM's CGI.



# THE MUMMY

## ARNOLD VOSLOO

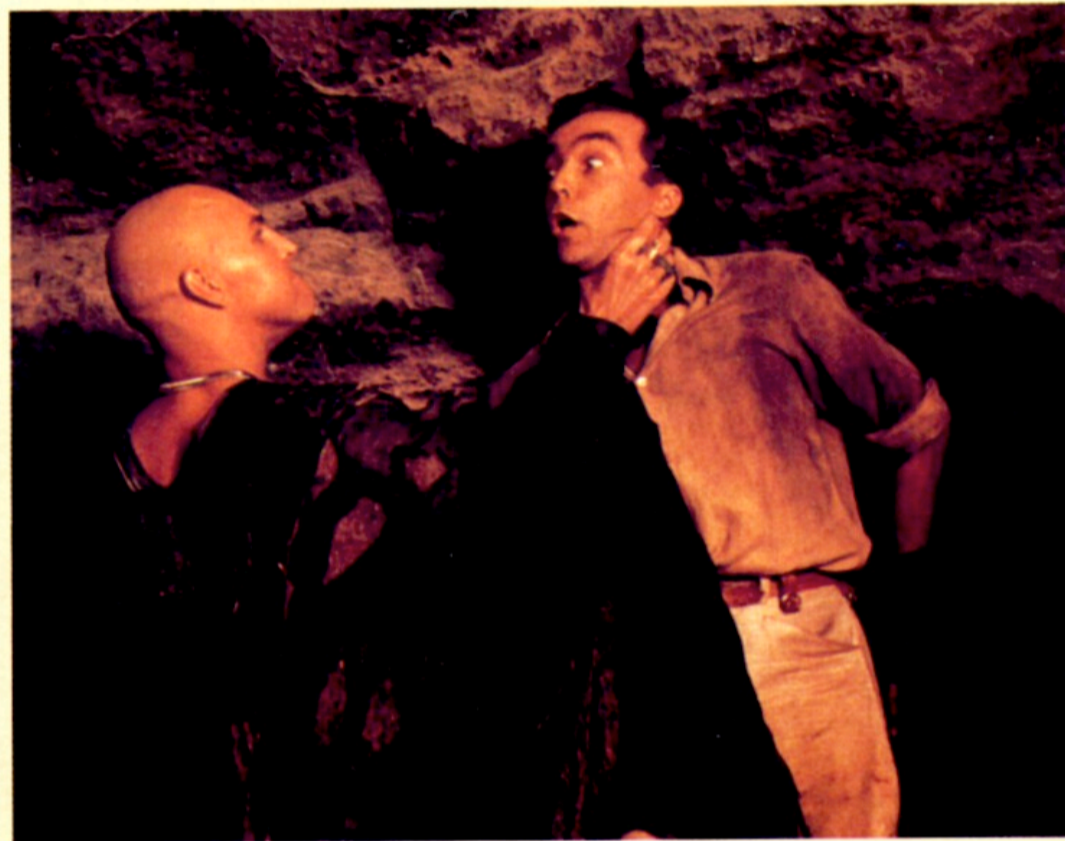
*From Darkman to Imhotep, changing one set of bandages for another.*

**B**orn into a theatrical family, Arnold Vosloo took to the stage as a classically trained actor in his homeland of South Africa. After ten years of taking part in anti-apartheid theatre, Vosloo was invited to appear in his first American theatrical production in Chicago in the early '90s. Director Ridley Scott noted his imposing stage presence and cast Vosloo in the better of the two Columbus epics, **1492** (1992), playing sidekick to Michael Wincott's heavy. As much as he enjoyed the experience, Vosloo felt his 18-month sabbatical in America was over and headed for New York before wending his way back to South Africa.

"I called my folks and said I'm coming home," he recalled. "Then Al Pacino's people called and asked me to come and read for *Salome*, the Oscar Wilde play. I was certain they were going to want a big name actor to take the role opposite Pacino and Sheryl Lee from *TWIN PEAKS*, who was great. But I was there in New York, and I said, 'What the heck? I'm flying out in two days; I'll go in.' So I went in, and I was so filled with fear I gave a good reading and they hired me!"

The New York theatre crowd turned out in droves to see Pacino, who had not set foot on Broadway since *American Buffalo* eight years earlier. Once again, Vosloo made a big impression, which resulted in his second cinematic role—another bad guy, this time for acclaimed Hong Kong action director John Woo, who was making his American theatrical debut with *HARD TARGET*—produced by Jim Jacks at Alphaville Productions, who would later produce *THE MUMMY*.

Before teaming up again with Jacks, Vosloo's genre connections began to take root in a more circuitous route with John Woo introducing Vosloo to film-maker Sam



Arnold Vosloo's Imhotep throttles explorer Jonathan Carnahan (John Hannah).

Raimi. Raimi at that time was searching for a new face to don the Darkman mask, taking over from Liam Neeson. "I did *DARKMAN 2* and *DARKMAN 3* for Sam, so it's kind of interesting," Vosloo observed. "My wife pointed out to me the other night—I didn't really think about it when I took on *THE MUMMY*, but a lot of genre fans might know me from these *DARKMAN* films. It seems like it's gone this way. I just finished another horror movie before *THE MUMMY* with Brian Yusna, whom I loved. It's called *PROGENY* and will probably go straight-to-video. Some classic Yusna, about a doctor and his wife impregnated by an alien, or at least he believes that she is. He sneaks her into the operating room and cuts her open. It was pretty creepy. Now I'm doing all this horror genre stuff, which is kind of nice."

An admitted horror fan—who lists *PHANTASM* as his taste—Vosloo is aware of the problems associated with being typecast into the horror world. Nevertheless, he has enjoyed the unexpected challenge. "Had you asked me how I

thought I might make it in Hollywood, I would have thought I'd go in on the character bad guy stuff. I never would have dreamed that it would have been *THE MUMMY*. If this movie works, it'll change my life. For better or for worse, I can't tell you now. Because I am the shark in *JAWS*. I'm the fire in *TOWERING INFERNO*. I am the disaster in the disaster movie. That really does type you in a way. But I'm really proud of the film, and I'm proud of what we achieved.

"The challenge that Universal is going to have with this film, certainly for the MTV crowd, is to change the whole public perception of this character. It's always been a guy running around in rags, stumbling through the streets with tampons hanging from his head—it's completely not that in this movie. There's never really been a movie where the Mummy has had super powers. There's never been a movie where the Mummy has been really scary. I think Stephen's script addressed all that, so I think it's going to be pretty wild."

Joe Fordham

IF YOU CAN in 1989; and British-born production designer Allan Cameron, who designed Sommers' take on *THE JUNGLE BOOK* for Disney in 1994.

"*THE MUMMY* was my 19th film as a production designer," Cameron said. With *HIGHLANDER*, *WILLOW*, and *STARSHIP TROOPERS* behind him, Cameron was no stranger to working in fantasy, yet the approach he adopted for Sommers' latest project began with a discovery that would lend historical detail to the horror. "I watched the Karloff movie, but I really didn't want to be too influenced by it, so I went to the British Museum and spent hours in their library, researching Egyptology. I found this amazing volume that Napoleon had commissioned when he invaded Egypt. He had his artists, etchers and archeologists catalogue all the artifacts and tombs they found in ancient Egypt. It became our art department bible."

Sommers' screenplay dictated three major locales. A 12-minute prologue would establish Imhotep's backstory in Ancient Egypt, circa 1000 B.C.; then the main body of the film would be set in and around Cairo, 1925, with two visits to Humanaptra, a subterranean City of the Dead, the later for the final showdown with the resurrected Mummy. After considering locations in the Arizona desert, an area used by Jacks for *TOMBSTONE*, costs for the extensive studio interiors of Humanaptra made a Hollywood

Arnold Vosloo appears in his ceremonial robes, preparing to raise his beloved princess from the dead.







The intrepid trio of explorers enter Humanaptra, the underground city of the dead.

shoot impractical. Instead, the 81-day production would take the company across the Atlantic for six weeks in Marrakesh, Morocco, and the outlying deserts of Erfoud, followed by eight weeks at Shepperton Studios in England.

"Once we decided to shoot in London, Morocco became a very easy choice," commented Jacks. "Also, creatively it was better. Erfoud had some of the biggest sand dunes in the world, so we had these three mile long dunes in the background of our shots. It looks like the end of the world." With cinematographer Adrian Biddle rounding out the mainly British crew, casting was also taking shape in Los Angeles.

The first player to be secured was Brendan Fraser, whose appearances in light-hearted fare like *GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE* have alternated with subtle dramatic roles, most notably in *GODS AND MONSTERS*. The starring role in *THE MUMMY* would land him somewhere in between. "Pretty early on I wrote the lead guy as a macho action hero because he was involved with a lot of physical conflict, and I wanted him to be able to respond," stated Sommers. "The script also had a lot of humor in it—it was never camp, because whenever we're with the Mummy I wanted to play it deadly serious. But I also wanted the story to have

an element of humor and be fun. At six-four and close to 200 pounds, solid rock, Brendan was a big strong guy who could throw a punch and shoot a gun, but he could also make you laugh, and laugh at himself. He has that kind of charm."

Fraser's involvement cemented the studio's interest, which was growing hotter thanks to developments at ILM. "We were working on the design before the picture was completely green-lit," said Burton. "Of course, we mostly had to meet Stephen Sommers' vision of what he wanted his Mummy to be, but on top of that there were lots of people making decisions about whether or not this was going to be the kind of picture that they wanted to put their money into. Our involvement certainly helped that decision-making process by presenting the studio with a viable, good-looking design."

Burton turned to creature department supervisor Jeff Mann and art director Alex Laurent to instigate the process. "We came up with some designs for the different stages of the Mummy, to show how he regenerated back into a human," Burton recalled. "Once we worked out how he would transform from one stage to the other, we did a lot of conceptual work showing the Mummy not only in a black-

and white technical blueprint, but also in the environments we hoped to place him in, to show how he would look in cinematic terms. It was one of these concept pieces that really got Steve very excited."

The process of realizing Sommers' concept would take Burton and an eventual team of close to 100 artists five months of research and development, two months of shooting and ten months of post-production to complete, but it was at this stage that Imhotep began to show promise. Said Burton, "The organs were exposed, swinging around, loose. We built him up out of computer graphics geometries, painting away the pieces that were rotted and decomposed, and then we

used motion capture, plus traditional key frame animation and procedural systems, so that as he moved, his guts would swing, his bandages sway, his skin would stretch, his muscles would bulge and his brain would bash around inside his head. He was one gruesome guy, and we were really proud of him."

Two sets of Imhotep maquettes were rendered in clay, each approximately 18 inches tall, full-body and head-and-shoulder versions, to illustrate the overall and close-up detail plan. The sculptures were then used as the basis for planning all computer graphics work and for plotting the interface with areas to be generated by makeup artist Nick Dudman in London, who would join the team in early 1998.

Himself a veteran of *THE PHANTOM MENACE*, and a long-time associate with ILM, Dudman recalled entering *THE MUMMY* as very much a collaborator in developing the CG approach. "They were very clear that there was a very heavy CG involvement from ILM," Dudman noted, "but they were very unclear at that point where the cross-over was going to be. There was a big area in the movie where Imhotep would be half makeup and half CG, and it was necessary to create a makeup that the computer could lock onto in post-production and add CG elements that couldn't physically be created without injuring the actor."

Imhotep's regeneration would finally break down into a five-stage progression, the first

Evelyn Carnahan (Rachel Weisz, center), as the librarian of antiquities, adopts native garb during her search for the lost city of the dead.





An invasion of rats inhibit the explorers' progress—another of the Biblical-style plagues realized via ILM's computer-generated imagery.

being ILM's full-body walking corpse. "My involvement was really the bits in the middle," said Dudman, "where he went from half-rotted to sort of quarter-rotted to, ooh, only a bit rotted. Then when he was absolutely gorgeous he was just in straight makeup, which wasn't my involvement." Large chunks and cavities were to be carved into the Mummy performer by mapping the actor with a skillfully designed prosthetic, the edges of which were marked with an array of specifically designed light-emitting diodes that the computer could track and lock onto throughout the scenes. It was a refinement of a technique employed by Dudman and ILM on the *STAR WARS* prequel.

"We were doing a head re-

placement on one of the characters in *THE PHANTOM MENACE*, Dudman recalled. "In that instance, it was something that was not going to end up in the final cut of the film; it was merely a way of giving the artists rendering the final creature a base to work from. On *THE MUMMY*, we were creating 50 percent of what the final guy was going to look like, so we took the technology we had on *PHANTOM MENACE* and refined it down into a makeup, which meant you had to get LEDs, batteries, switches and things down to about a two millimeter thickness on the surface of the actor."

Clearly, there was still one crucial element missing from the production. Before Dudman could begin, and before ILM

could start modeling their evolving CG monster, the living, breathing human performer was still needed to fulfill the inestimable task of stepping into Karloff's shoes.

British actress Rachel Weisz had already been selected to play Evelyn Carnahan, librarian at the Cairo Museum of Antiquities and catalyst to reviving Imhotep's passions. "I first saw Rachel in the movie *LAND GIRLS*," Sommers recalled. "When I met her and she did some readings, she was really terrific. As for Imhotep, we were kind of at our wit's end. We auditioned a bunch of people; then suddenly Arnold Vosloo walked in. It was funny. At first there was something kind of intimidating about him. I can't explain it. He's Shake-

spearean; he's serious; he's very commanding. Within 30 seconds I knew he was going to be the guy, and I never do that. Usually, I'm more pensive and maybe bring people back for a second time. But he walked in and it was a done deal. And he was a blast to work with."

Vosloo shared the sentiment, although initially he had not held much hope of winning the role so quickly. "At that point I figured the studio was looking for a big name, because DeNiro had just done *FRANKENSTEIN*. I came in anyway because I was such a fan of the original—it was not even like a horror movie; it was more like this romantic fantasy—and I said, if I were to play Imhotep, I was not interested in playing him as the bad guy; I wanted to play the romance aspect. I guess Stephen and I were on the same level in the terms of what we wanted to do because, four days later, I got the call and I absolutely freaked. They told me I was the Mummy!"

One shaved head later, Vosloo was subjected to the beginning of his torture at the hands of the visual effects team. "When Arnold was cast we were chomping at the bit because we needed his head to start building our creature," Burton recalled. "We ran him through our typical wringer. We sent our photo team down to L.A. to shoot him with still

Taking Imhotep's image beyond the old bandage look was a combined effort of ILM and makeup man Nick Dudman.



cameras against grids and figure out how big his head was. We measured every part of him, photographed him walking to calculate his gait, and then we cyberscanned and motion-captured him—which was a real integral part of what we did.”

The cyberscan was a process whereby Vosloo sat motionless before a laser scanner that captured a digital contour map of his body surface, and a head and shoulders life cast immersion in a sandwich of hot plaster and cold porridge courtesy of Dudman’s prosthetic crew. Next, Vosloo had to face the reality of his first costume fitting in London. “I’m no Mister Fitness, but I had done some exercise,” stated Vosloo. “When I finally got to London, they showed me my costume, and it was like the size of a postage stamp.” Producer Jacks, who had worked with Vosloo on the John Woo action film *HARD TARGET*, was quick to offer advice. “Arnold was only about ten or fifteen pounds overweight, but he had to put on this little skirt and, boy, did every ounce of it show!” Jacks laughed. “I told him he had a month to lose the weight, and I suggested he take a look at *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS* to see how Yul Brynner looked back then.”

Jack’s suggestion proved hard to follow, although Brynner was exactly the look that Sommers wished to imbue to the living Imhotep. “Brenner was just so powerful. How can you match that, clothed or not clothed?” commented Vosloo. “They inflicted a trainer on me, whom I tried to avoid at all costs; but, because we were all in Morocco and it was so hot, you just don’t eat in that kind of climate. So I said ‘to hell with all alcohol and sugar,’ and that really did it. You’ll be amazed: stop drinking your Starbucks lattes, nix the sugar, and it’s two thousand calories less than you normally use. It was pretty easy, actually, to get in shape.”

In addition to looking like an Egyptian, Vosloo also had to talk like one. From the outset, Sommers worked on research. “Doctor Stuart Smith, of the Institute of Archeology at UCLA, went over my script to ensure everything was as authentic as possible,” said Som-

## TOMB RAIDERS

**“What I proposed was to do *THE MUMMY* as a big event movie,” said Sommers. “I wanted to do an epic, romantic adventure, and I didn’t want a guy wrapped in bandages.”**



John Hannah, Rachel Weisz, and Brendan Fraser prepare to confront the terrors that await them in Imhotep’s underground lair, the city of the dead.

mers, who recalled some particularly illuminating details. “I never really knew how people made mummies. They didn’t just wrap you in bandages. They stuck a sharp poker up your nose to scramble your brains. Then they’d rip it out through your nose with a tong and squirt vinegar inside you, and rattle your skull around. They ripped out your kidneys, your liver and intestines, and threw them into jars. It was really a gross, disgusting process. We’re PG-13, so I just had my characters talk about this. When it came to ancient Egyptian dialogue, that was also a problem because no one has heard the language in over two thousand years. Doctor Smith really had to coach us.”

Vosloo worked with Doctor Smith by phone, phonetically learning lines, sometimes repeated back to him at 3:00 a.m., Morocco time, from L.A., when shooting demanded a new line. Vosloo was proud of his interpretation. “Imhotep’s dialogue was Ancient Egyptian all the way through, though I also speak some Hebrew,” Vosloo noted. “I’m sure the studio would have been happier if we’d

just been speaking English, but we really fought for it, and I think it’s much more authentic.”

In keeping with that authenticity, Sommers insisted his *Mummy* play it totally straight. “Absolutely,” Vosloo agreed. “I’d never do any horror acting, for want of a better word. I knew that since the ILM effects were all going to be there, I just had to show up and be absolutely straight and say, ‘Guys, I’m gonna kill you all, but, hey, I want my girlfriend.’ That is what this film was all about.”

British actor John Hannah (*SLIDING DOORS*) imparted necessary exposition as Weisz’ screen brother, Jonathan Carnahan. Weisz, Fraser and Hannah supplied Sommers’ requisite vein of humor. “Imhotep is *Sturm und Drang*,” Vosloo observed, “their stuff is far lighter, throwing in those aspects of comedy. They were really great.” Vosloo was particularly complimentary of his co-star Fraser’s performance. “If this really works, it’ll change the public’s whole perception of Brendan Fraser. It really puts him in a whole new kind of Clark Gable-Harrison Ford-romantic leading man role.”

The production landed in Marrakesh two weeks prior to shooting to set up a base of operations in the ancient market city and finalize the transformation of the city into by-gone Cairo, an operation that employed both physical art direction and digital enhancement. “The real Cairo today is a modern city, with huge hotels and office blocks,” explained production designer Cameron. “It was much easier to shoot in Marrakesh. We turned the local Town Hall into the Cairo Museum of Antiquities, which was quite an interesting project. We took over several streets and squares, took down telephone lines and electricity cables, and dressed it with period cars, market stalls, and brought in camels and really gave it the atmosphere of Cairo.”

Visual effects producer Jennifer Bell was on hand to shepherd the logistical aspects of the effects. “We shot a lot of plates for our matte paintings in Marrakesh, we did a sandstorm sequence there, and we had to endure some sandstorms ourselves.” The sandstorm in the film was one of a series of apocalyptic phenomena conjured by Imhotep in an attempt to disable mortal intervention in his plan to revive his ancient queen. “The sandstorms were amazing,” commented Burton. “They were kind of an outgrowth of existing technology that had been done on *TWISTER* which we adapted to our own evil purposes. It’s pretty spectacular.”

Numerous other plagues wrought by ILM included rains of insects, beetles, locusts and flies. “We didn’t do frogs,” Burton apologized. Dudman’s crew were also called upon to set what he believes may be a prosthetic record. “We had umpteen crowds running around covered in boils and sores, and we had to mass-produce prosthetics for all of them,” he stated. “As I recall, we applied 147 prosthetic makeups in three hours, just six of us. They were chucked on, but we did it, and churned out a crowd of about 400 covered in prosthetic boils.” Calculating the math, each artist handled 24

makeups, at eight an hour, produced one make-up every seven point five minutes.

Fortunately for Dudman, both the plague of boils and the first applications of Arnold Vosloo's partially regenerated Imhotep prosthetic occurred in night shoots, sparing Vosloo and the prosthetic team the nightmare of trying to make makeup stick in 130° heat. Application times for Vosloo's full-head rotted makeup, a foam prosthetic with LEDs, averaged an hour and a half, with the half-head version taking approximately 50 minutes.

Digital crowd replication and background plates for period city-scape matte paintings completed the Marrakesh effects duties for ILM. A remote desert location at Erfoud, near the Algerian border, would next pit cast and crew against the full force of the Saharan heat. Sommers recalled his first experience of the desert landscape, on a location scout prior to the shoot. "I now understand when in *LAWRENCE OF ARABIA* they ask Lawrence why he likes the desert and he says, 'Because it's clean.' It really is; and it's so quiet. We've been talking about that in editing, how there are no sound effects out in the desert. Whenever you cut to night it's a cliché you hear crickets, but when you're really out there it's like being on the surface of the moon."

Director of photography Biddle was equally enamored by the natural beauty of the desert, which often necessitated mobilizing the crew at 2:30 a.m. to capture the first rays of morning light. "The color scheme was so romantic," said Sommers. "The sky was blue and the desert was gold. We got really nervous on our first location scout. The desert looked so beautiful. Then one of our location contacts told us that by the time we started shooting in May, it was going to be so hot that the sky turns white. Adrien was so depressed, but for some reason when we arrived it was really hot, but the sky stayed blue." Shooting was structured for the early hours and evenings to avoid the flat, harsh, featureless lighting cast by the midday sun. Then, as they arrived at Humanaptra, the story took on a

## ROMANCING THE BONES

**"Since the ILM effects were going to be there, I just had to show up," said Vosloo, "and be absolutely straight and say, 'Guys, I'm gonna kill you, but I want my girlfriend.'"**



In the prologue, set in ancient Egypt, Imhotep is seized by the temple guards before he can complete the blasphemous resurrection ceremony.

darker bearing.

An extinct volcano housing a disused ancient prison served as the entrance to the Mummy's subterranean domain. Cameron's discovery solved a story point and began a series of events in his director's mind that would set up a new climax for the film by multiplying the odds against O'Connell's team.

"We knew we wanted to build this city in the desert," Sommers observed, "but it had to be hidden because no one's seen it in a thousand years. We didn't want to make it so small it would be boring, but if it was huge somebody would have spotted it. Allan was driving around Morocco and he found this volcano; that gave us the idea to build everything inside." As written into the script, the moment of discovery of the city in the film was to be an optical illusion that revealed itself only from a certain part of the desert, at a certain time of day. ILM provided the visual trick, shooting elements in the desert. It was around this time Dudman

ultimately finalized the look for the fiercest of Imhotep's minions buried with him at Hamunaptra.

"Stephen re-wrote the script halfway through our build, when we were already up and running," Dudman recalled. "He came in and said, 'Wouldn't it be great if there were these things called Soldier Mummies? I wonder what they'd look like?' I sat down with my lead designer, Gary Pollard, and we came up with the design for the Soldier Mummies and the Priest Mummies."

Dudman and Pollard conferred closely with ILM, who advised on the technical parameters required for rendering computer-generated versions of the new ancillary characters. Dudman's design process also crossed over into the realm of the costume department. "John Bloomfield, the costume designer, was very, very helpful and let us have free rein, which I can only admire him for," Dudman remarked. "We ran everything by him, costume-

wise, but we handled the total look of the Soldier Mummies."

Burton explained, "The Priests are Imhotep's minions. When they wake up from their three-thousand-year sleep, they're not in particularly good shape; they're pretty screwed up. Their limbs aren't exactly what they used to be, and their faces definitely have seen better days. But they're aggressive, and they're nasty, and they won't stop until somebody chops them into enough tiny pieces to prevent them from being useful. That doesn't mean they stop moving, but they're not that big of a threat anymore. These are all bandaged-up guys; they're a lot creepier and more corpse-like than the traditional Hammer and the original Universal Mummy. The Priests are more or less sort of hand-to-hand fighters. They're guys whose business is raising the dead, not fighting, but they're very creepy and clawy, and they're hanging all over everybody and they're very dangerous and nasty.

"Just about the time those guys get dispatched, the Soldier Mummies show up," Burton continued. "These guys, although they're mummies, and brought back from the dead, are well armed. They're extremely strong, move incredibly quick. They can leap through the air, and they are very aggressive. They were born a little out of some of the really great Hong Kong period warrior pictures. They're not drawn too strongly from that, because we didn't want to cross the genre, but they are certainly very, very good fighters. They carry battle axes, swords, spears; they move in groups, and they attack in a very sophisticated style. They wear armored skirts and armored breastplates, and usually have more than one weapon."

As he did with the earlier ILM conceptual art, Sommers homed onto one key image that crystallized the Soldier Mummy concept and the feel for the climax of the film. "Nick Dudman did the drawing that really turned everybody on," noted Burton. "This guy who's leaping through the air

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# THE MUMMY

## DEVELOPMENT HELL

*Universal Pictures took over a decade, with a half dozen writers and directors, to unwrap Imhotep.*

*By Joe Fordham*

THE MUMMY has a great deal riding on it, after 12 years in development, backed by the talents of nine writers and five directors. It is always difficult to assign authorship to the development process, and the 1999 MUMMY is no exception; its genesis has been a complex and multi-colored story.

According to the records of the Writers Guild of America, West, first evidence of the remake was logged in 1987 with a treatment from distinguished horror filmmaker George Romero. Although Romero proved unavailable for comment, screenwriter Abbie Bernstein was able to throw light on the concepts being entertained in 1988. "My understanding was that George Romero had originally been brought in to write and direct," Bernstein recalled. "They still wanted him to direct, but they wanted somebody else to write. So I was brought in and they said, 'What we want is something like THE TERMINATOR.' My perception of THE TERMINATOR was you have a creature chasing a person who has something he can't get rid of. The creature is going to keep chasing the person as long as he has it, but if the person stops, not only is he going to get ripped apart, but it's the end of the world.

"What I came up with," said Bernstein, "was an idea that a sacred orb had been buried with the Mummy. If you got this thing wet it would completely dissolve anything organic, so if you got one drop of this on your body, you would melt like the Wicked Witch of the West. My story was set in the present day, where scientists had designed a machine that could stimulate nerves on disabled people. They test this on a mummy that had been recently unearthed, buried with this ball, and the machine works way too well. The Mummy comes to



This design by XFX, Inc., is one of the many versions of the Mummy that were developed but never filmed.

life, starts ripping everybody to shreds and goes after its ball. One of the lab technicians, the hero of the story, grabs the ball and starts running with it, and as he's going discovers what it is and what the mummy wants. The Mummy all this time is getting stronger by ripping out people's internal organs and planting them in its own chest, where they take root. The Mummy wants to get his ball back, throw it into the ocean where it will destroy all life on Earth the

first time it rains. Our hero has to figure out how to kill the Mummy, and in the meantime everybody's thinking he's a mass murderer because everywhere he goes there are all these horrible dead bodies. From what I understand that is not really at all what any of the subsequent versions are about."

Bernstein said Romero's involvement at this point was confined to phone conversations from his production base in Pittsburgh, but after approximately a year on the project he chose to leave. Said Bernstein, "I think the agenda of the film changed totally. While there was a smidgen of romance between the lab tech and the female acquisition person in the museum, my draft was totally constructed as a foot-race. In fact, I was told to slow it down. In my first draft, the Mummy started ripping people apart on page four. It was very violent and very fast and the Mummy was not remotely romantic. He had no more social interaction than the T-Rex did in JURASSIC PARK. He basically just wanted his ball back so he could get on with destroying the world."

With Romero's departure, Alphaville producers Jim Jacks and Sean Daniel redirected their sights to another team. Per the Writers Guild's next listing, the next two MUMMY players were logged in by a 1990 treatment by Clive Barker, followed by a 1991 screenplay by Mick Garris.

"Clive and I had met and talked about doing things together before," Garris explained. "Originally, Universal was very high on making CLIVE BARKER'S THE MUMMY, so Clive came up with a brief outline which he was going to direct. I wrote a very bizarre and twisted script based on Clive's very bizarre and twisted treatment; we both were really excited about it. Most of the story took place in Beverly Hills, in the land of tummy tucks and face lifts, but it was set in a museum

with a large Egyptology department. They brought an entire tomb and rebuilt it as it was originally in Egypt, recreated entirely within this Beverly Hills museum. It was almost like 'Chariots of the Mummies;' in other words, the ancient Egyptians were inspired by and involved with alien intelligences from thousands of years before."

Barker concurred with Garris as to the studio's conservative reaction to their refurbished Mummy tale. "It was a little too weird for Universal," Barker explained. "One of the problems is that, unlike vampires or the Frankenstein Monster, the Mummy is one of the least likely characters to scare you. So our version only used the Mummy as the starting place for something else, which was very grim."

Garris would later find himself further grappling with the mummy, as would George Romero, but before their return Alan Ormsby was brought in to provide another version in 1993 that brought the project closer to its origins. Ormsby, veteran of Paul Schrader's updated CAT PEOPLE, recalled a take on THE MUMMY that was in some ways close to Bernstein's, although his pitch was delivered cold.

"When I came on board, I didn't know any other people had been involved," Ormsby said. "What I was told was that Anne Rice had written a book called *The Mummy*, which I also hadn't read, and I guess they were a little worried about some conflict with what we were doing with THE MUMMY. Basically, I went back to the original Karloff film and did a modern day updated version of that story. It had a prologue in Egypt and then the rest of it took place in Los Angeles. My pitch to them was that it should be a "Terminator" Mummy. They liked that,"—he laughed—"I didn't know they'd heard it before!"

Ormsby recalled that Joe Dante was linked to the project as director at this point, which may give some idea to the tone of the project at the time. It was grounded in L.A.—Dante's idea; makeup effects man Rick Baker would eventually become involved; and both writer and director brought a new enthusiasm to the source material. The problem was that costs had begun to climb.

"The script came in with a fairly sizeable budget," stated Ormsby. "I think that spooked [Universal exec] Sid Sheinberg, and he kind of dismissed the whole thing with the idea that it should take place in

#### UN-SCARY MONSTER?

**"The Mummy is the least likely character to scare you," said Clive Barker. "So our version only used him as a starting place for something else, which was very grim."**



George Romero (directing THE DARK HALF) was the first director attached to THE MUMMY, when Universal first decided to revive the character back in 1987.

Egypt. He wanted the guy with the bandages stumbling around. I don't know if he's right or wrong, but that was what he wanted, and that's not what we delivered. We did have a guy in bandages; we had him come back to life; it had a lot of great stuff in it, but it wasn't there yet. It never quite got finished before they pulled the plug."

Ormsby envisioned the ancient prince Imhotep, like Karloff's character in the original, as an intelligent, romantic figure—although Ormsby's would have been more overtly virile and would ultimately have suffered a particularly ironic demise. "Imhotep regenerated himself into a very attractive young guy," Ormsby explained. "The way he learns about the past—what happened to Egypt—was that he went to a synagogue. He hears people singing in Hebrew, goes in and sees the murals on the wall, and they're the only language he can understand. The Rabbi talks to him in Hebrew, tells him about the Red Sea. My ending took place in an underground pyramid in Death Valley. I had a twist where Imhotep discovered his princess really didn't love him, that the whole three thousand years he'd spent in this living death was based on a wrong assumption, at which moment he became quite vicious." Ormsby remained open-minded as to the potential: "I loved the idea. If I had another shot at it, I would have said, 'Let's do this straight; let's try to do this really scary.' I was very

disappointed it didn't pan out."

Dante and his subsequent 1994 screenwriter, John Sayles, were unavailable for comment. 1994 also saw the return involvement of George Romero, followed closely by Mick Garris in 1995. "George came in and did a new couple of drafts," Garris recalled. "He was involved in another project where the schedules interfered, and it was pay-or-play, so he had to leave THE MUMMY to do this other project, which eventually fell apart. The poor guy—such a nice man and a very talented filmmaker. George's version was close to going, so Alphaville came to me to do a rewrite and direct. I did two or three drafts that I was really excited about, and the studio had virtually green-lit. We were into casting, I was considering Vincent Perez as Imhotep. We had Steve Johnson doing designs for the effects, which were beautiful; he and his art director Bill Corso really did some great stuff."

Garris found himself back in more familiar territory compared to his previous mummy venture with Clive Barker.

"What Clive and I had done was something entirely out of the imagination. This next version really combined the Karloff and the Lon Chaney, Jr. movies in that we had both Imhotep [Karloff's reincarnated prince] and Kharis [Chaney's bandaged zombie]. It was a romance," Garris continued. "It did have some elements of DRACULA, that love beyond the ages between Imhotep and his princess, which was very similar to the passionate romance that Coppola used—but that actually came from the Richard Matheson-scripted television version of DRACULA. I would love to have made it a period movie, in that Art Deco explosion of the '20s and '30s which was inspired by the King Tut discoveries in 1922, but the budget would not allow that. They were very tight on the budget."

Contemporary settings and Egyptian prologue were to be shot in British Columbia; production staff had been secured. What nobody counted on was the sale of Universal MCA to Seagrams. It was a frustrating time for Garris. "We were virtually green lit," he explained. "Sid Sheinberg was leaving the company, and he had a deal with Universal. They gave him the option to choose movies in the pipeline at Universal to produce through his independent company, the Bubble Factory. He decided he wanted to produce THE MUMMY."

For a second time, Garris saw his version of the project unravel. "Our budget was be-

tween \$15- and \$16-million. It was a low budget, high quality movie. Sheinberg decided to spend a million dollars on a writer and, with this name attached, draw a more stellar cast. This was going to jack up the budgetary levels, but it was a little bit disheartening because everyone was so happy with the script, including myself. No writer wanted to do it. They all either liked the script or felt it wasn't something they wanted to do. They then decided to bring in a high-profile director. They were unable to do that too. So basically they came in on a virtually green-lit project and turned it into a no-go movie."

In 1996, one year after Garris' last draft of *THE MUMMY*, the next incarnation was registered at the Writers Guild. Written by Kevin Jarre, whose credits include *TOMBSTONE* and *GLORY*, this would prove to be the final stepping stone that led to Stephen Sommers' ultimate involvement and the film unspooling on screens this summer. As producer Jim Jacks explained, the executives at Universal were still determined to resurrect the Mummy. They were finally convinced the way to do this was to provide finances for stars, a period setting, action, and effects.

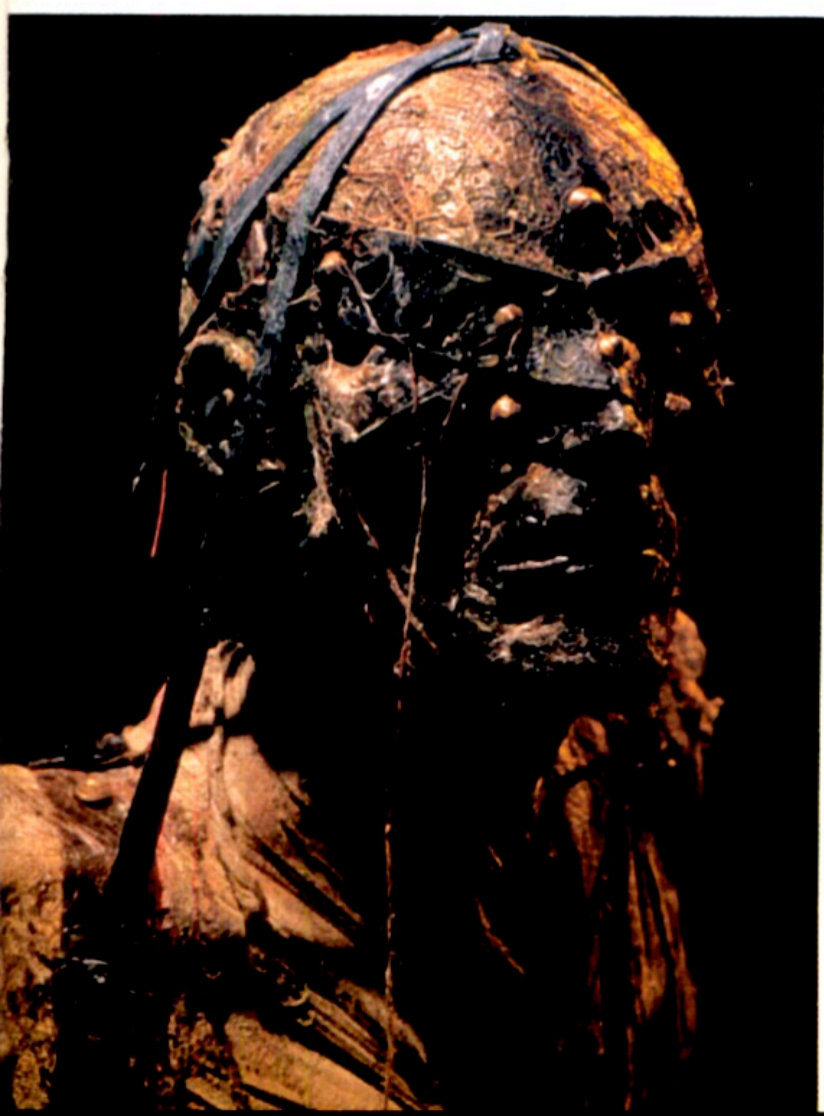
Jarre's script was dark, romantic and harder-edged. Stephen Sommers' version would adopt a radically new tone which differed from the original Imhotep tale in two major areas. First, Imhotep must still fulfill his curse, but his revenge is not initially directed at the main protagonists of our story. Secondly, Imhotep still wants to resurrect his bride, but the reincarnation theme has been transformed into a rejuvenation. "Basically what happens in our story," Jacks explained, "is they awaken the Mummy; they escape to Cairo; he follows them, but then once he gets the woman he needs to regenerate his princess, he fulfills the Mummy's curse by killing the men that actually awak-



get. "A lot of writers become very protective once they get their script on, but Stephen was very collaborative," Jacks recalled. "The interesting thing was, as the script got better and better, the budget kept climbing. In fact, when I started off I told Stephen the studio would never spend more than \$40-million on this movie. Our first budget came in pretty high, so I thought the studio would just never agree to it. When they said, 'Well, it's pretty high but who do you think we can get in it?' I had no idea they'd react like that. I thought they'd say, 'Well, we're not even going to talk about this until we cut \$15 mil. Anyway, we started talking about casting, and they put Brendan on the list. Now Brendan shares an agent with Steve, so he was aware of the project, and he was instantly interested. They offered him the part; we got the movie green-lit; the budget still crept up a little, but I have to say the studio have stuck with it, and we went off and we made it."

The second half of Sommers' story involves Fraser and Hannah's attempts to prevent Imhotep completing the reincarnation of his bride, with Weisz as sacrificial victim. Jacks continued, "Imhotep has to go back to the tomb, to this City of the Dead, to revive Anksanamon. Our heroes follow him and he causes to be reborn all the priests and soldiers that were buried alive with him. These are our bandaged mummies. It's like an army of the undead."

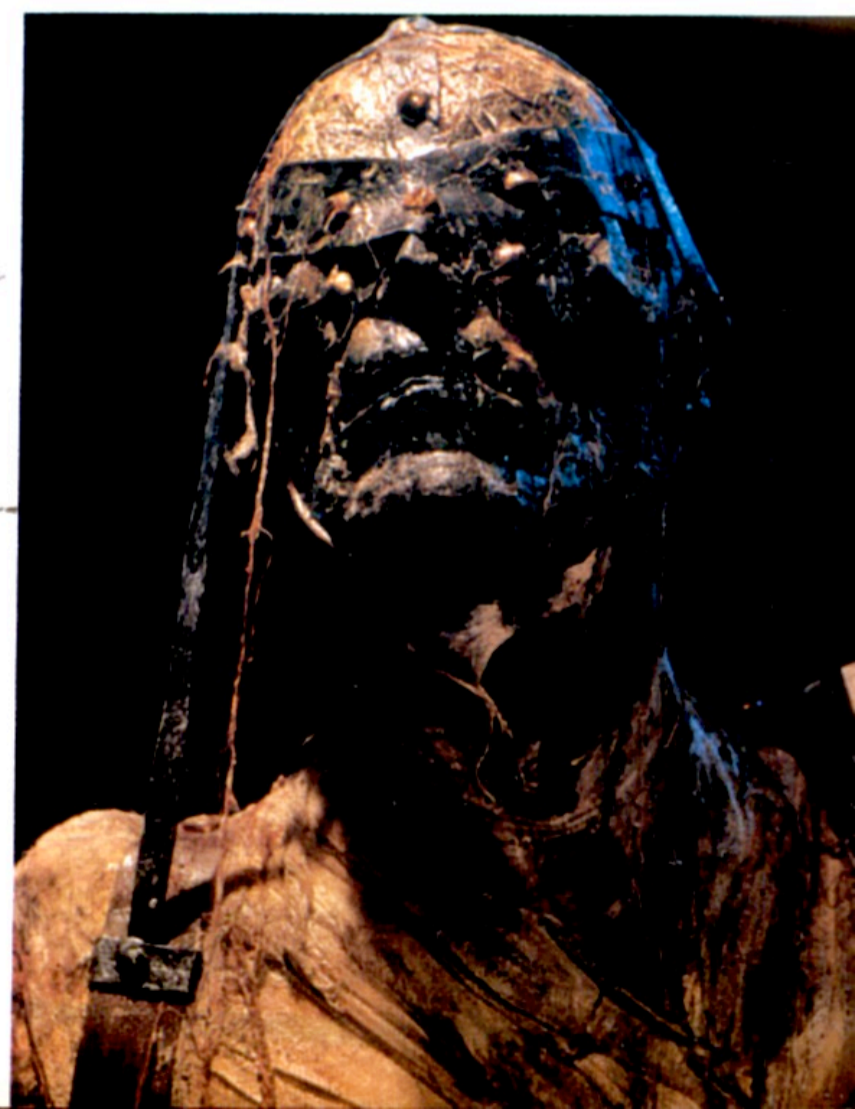
Only time will tell if this new Mummy will rise in triumph or crumble into dust until the next revival. "You don't want to be overly optimistic," said Jim Jacks. "Certainly we aren't, but the nice thing is we're already figuring out what we're going to do with the sequel, how the Mummy comes to London. We actually changed the fate of one of our characters—if there's a sequel we want this character to be in it. We certainly had fun making it and we'd like to do it again." □



ened him—not our heroes, who were actually on a different part of the dig at that time."

The heroes in question are Brendan Fraser as a French Legionnaire, Rachel Weisz as an American archaeologist, and John Hannah as a British Egyptologist. Fraser was secured while Sommers worked with Jacks and company in developing the final screenplay, a factor which itself proved advantageous to the evolving bud-

**AFX's designs and makeup tests for Mick Garris' unfilmed *MUMMY* included a Clive Barker-inspired S&M element, slightly reminiscent of the Cenobites.**



# THE MUMMY W

## How Universal added a new monster to the

*Oh! Amon-Ra -  
Oh! God of Gods -  
Death is but the  
Doorway to new life.  
We live today - we  
shall live again.  
In many forms shall  
we return -  
Oh, Mighty One!*

—from “The Scroll of  
Thoth” in Universal’s  
THE MUMMY (1932).

Universal Studios, California, fall, 1932. Boris Karloff, a sensation as Frankenstein’s monster, is now playing the 3700-year-old Im-Ho-Tep of THE MUMMY—acting, as the *New York Times* would report, “with the restraint natural to a man whose face is hidden behind synthetic wrinkles.”

Karl Freund, 300-pound Bohemian cinematographer of such German classics as DER GOLEM and METROPOLIS, is making his directorial bow in the grand Teutonic tradition of screams and swaggers. The

Universal back lot provides “Cairo,” while a location jaunt to Red Rock Canyon produces “Valley of the Kings” under a California sky. There are two special animals: “Wolfram” the German Shepherd, and “Bast” the fluffy white cat—each finding a surprise admirer in the pet-loving Karloff.

David Manners is playing yet another romantic horror hero. Edward Van Sloan is again dripping sagacity as a venerable professor of the occult. And Zita Johann—in a long black curly wig, an Egyptian headdress and a filmy costume that makes her look as if she just sashayed off the stage of Cairo’s Pink Pussycat strip parlor—is soulfully portraying the reincarnation of the Princess Anck-es-en-Amon.

Somehow, by the blessing of Amon-Ra, it all worked.

THE MUMMY is actually a macabre love story—an Anne Rice novel decades ahead of its time. Hollywood’s most ardent lover of 1932 wasn’t Clark Gable in RED DUST. He was a towering, wrinkle-faced near skeleton in a fez, with burning eyes, a scarab ring, and an aura of Romance as mysterious as Ancient Egypt itself. “Anck-es-en-Amon,” woos our Mummy, “my love has lasted longer than the temples of our gods. No man ever suffered as I did for you.” Over 65 years after its production, THE MUMMY defies the ages as a striking fantasy of reincarnation. And as the late, great William K. Everson wrote in his book *Classics of the Horror Film*: “If one accepts BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN for its theatre and THE BODY SNATCHER for its literacy, then one must regard THE MUMMY as the closest that Hollywood ever came to creating a poem out of horror.”

*Death...eternal Punishment...For anyone who opens this casket...In the name of Amon-Ra—the King of the Gods!*

—from THE MUMMY.

It was Sunday evening, November 26, 1922 that Howard Carter discovered the burial chamber of King Tutankhamun. Soon surpassing interest in the priceless artifacts exhumed from the tomb were the terrible tales of a “curse” that guarded the grave, hurling down doom upon the heads of those who defiled it. Although Tut’s tomb bore nothing even resembling a curse on its hieroglyphic-painted walls, the discovery and rifling of the burial chamber spawned a suppressed scandal, political imbroglios, and ominous rumors that a curse had caused over 15 mysterious deaths and suicides.

Covering the story of King Tut’s tomb for the *New York World* was John L. Balderston. An adventurous, politically-inspired reporter, Balderston had won fame as the author of *Berkeley Square*, a Broadway hit that became a 1933 film, in which a 20th century Englishman travelled back to 18th century London—and fell in love. Balderston adapted the play *Dracula* for Broadway. His name later appeared on the film version, and also on FRANKENSTEIN (for adapting Peggy Webling’s London play to the screen). In 1995, John L. Balderston III remembered his father in a telephone interview:

“He started off as a journalist and went to Columbia School of Journalism. Later, he did cover for the *New York World* the opening of King Tut’s tomb, and that is what I think got him interested in Egyptology. He did a lot of reading and studying of it, was intrigued by the process of



THE MUMMY'S HAND, Universal's 1940 follow-up to THE MUMMY, recreated the character as Kharis: a mute, shuffling, unstoppable walking corpse.



# WALKS!

## horror film pantheon.

mummification; I still have a couple of real little trinkets he brought back from Egypt. And as to his later 'horror' films: when he was living in England, my father belonged to a society whose aim it was to debunk the spiritualist mediums. They would find a place that was supposedly haunted, stake it out and see if they could catch whatever it was that was going on."

In the wake of the box office triumph of FRANKENSTEIN, Carl Laemmle, Jr., Universal's 24-year-old general manager, sought a dynamic follow-up for the studio's new star. Balderston inherited CAGLIOSTRO, an early story treatment by Universal scenario editor Richard Schayer and Nina Wilcox Putnam (an early "feminist" writer whose agenda flickers here and there in THE MUMMY). The original title villain was a magician who had lived for over 3000 years, vengefully killing women who resembled the lover who had betrayed him. Cagliostro is amok in modern day San Francisco, with a death ray, a giant Nubian and a lust to destroy the heroine Helen, who resembles his tormentor of old.

Balderston went to work, writing at least six drafts in as many months, the title changing from CAGLIOSTRO to THE KING OF THE DEAD to IM-HO-TEP (the title was changed to THE MUMMY after shooting began). As Paul Jensen wrote in Midnight Marquee's *Boris Karloff Actors Series* book, Balderston simultaneously worked for Universal on a script for H. Rider Haggard's *She*, the fantasy of an all-powerful female kept alive by the Flame of Eternal Life. (RKO ultimately produced the film in 1935, without Balderston's name in the credits.) Also, as Balderston's son says: "My father's interest in Egyptology had shown up in *Berkeley Square*, in which an Egyptian symbol travels be-

tween the centuries, to tie the plot together."

So *She*, *Berkeley Square* and a considerable dash of *Dracula* combined in Balderston's morbid love tale: Egyptian high priest Im-Ho-Tep, buried alive for trying to raise his lover Anck-es-en-Amon from the dead, resurrects after archaeologists discover his tomb, then finds his long-lost love reincarnated in modern Cairo as Helen Grosvenor. Balderston's final screenplay of September 12, 1932 came complete with photographs of Egyptian ruins, suggestions that the costumers consult Vol. II of *History of the Pharaohs* by Weigall for designing the Egyptian jewelry, and even such factual tidbits as "mummies burn like dried tinder." He also had definite ideas on casting:

**HELEN GROSVENOR:** *For the heroine a dark girl of Egyptian appearance is essential; she should approximate in type the bust of Nefertiti in the Berlin Museum. Something mysterious and deep about her; an emotional actress of high caliber is needed to play the last sequence which calls for depth and power as well as subtlety. I suggested Katharine Hepburn for a test, but I think she has gone to New York.*

The role went to Zita Johann, a beautiful Hungarian actress with the look of a wide-eyed angel who knew a sexy secret. Johann had triumphed on Broadway in 1928's *Machinal* as a murderess who goes screaming to the electric chair, but her film career (including D.W. Griffith's disastrous 1931 *THE STRUGGLE*) had been largely a fiasco. One December night in 1929, Johann sat by the blazing fireplace of her pre-Revolutionary War house near the Hudson River and made very clear to me



her feelings about Golden Age Hollywood: "I had more respect for the whores on 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue than I did for the stars in Hollywood. The ego was what the moguls sold... To me, the theatre was related to the Spirit. I always demanded the truth of myself as an actress—that was my creed. Before every performance I sat alone in my dressing room, said my prayers, 'died unto myself' and became my character." (Zita also claimed that, in the late 1920s, she had discovered in the mountains that she was mystic as she began speaking Hindustani, and levitated. "And coming down was rotten!" she added.)

The role of Helen was a tour-de-force; she appeared not only in a flashback to ancient Egypt, but also in her other reincarnated lives: a Christian martyr, a lady of the Crusades, a

For THE MUMMY (1932), Universal created a titular monster named Im-Ho-Tep, who was more like an evil sorcerer than a walking corpse.

Saxon princess, a French lady of nobility. However, she did THE MUMMY only because she'd signed with Universal to star in the Indian love story LAUGHING BOY, which the studio cancelled (and MGM later produced). She owed Universal a movie and claimed she worked in Hollywood only to support her-then husband John Houseman, his mother and (as she later realized), Houseman's male lover. She recalled, "Universal's lawyer looked at the script and said to me, 'Miss Johann, you're not really going to make this picture, are you? It's a horror picture!'"

Making his debut as director was legendary cinematographer Karl Freund. A genius cameraman, Freund was known internationally for his pioneering

By Gregory William Mank



**KARLOFF** *The UNCANNY*  *IN* **THE MUMMY**

Karloff's Mummy goes "for a little walk," much to the dismay of Bramwell Fletcher's archeologist.

photography, such as strapping his camera to a trapeze in Germany's *VARIETY* (1925). Freund had endeared himself to Universal by shooting (and, he claimed, conceiving) the finale to *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT* (on which Arthur Edson had been principal cameraman): Lew Ayres shot by a sniper as he reaches to touch a butterfly. It was the best-remembered scene of the Academy Award-winning Best Picture of 1930, and Freund had joined Universal, serving as cameraman on such films as *DRACULA* and *MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE*. Freund's nickname was "Papa"—an odd soubriquet for a man remembered by many as a tyrant. Universal completed the casting, engaging two alumni of *DRACULA*: David Manners as hero Frank Whemple, Helen's lover in modern Cairo; and Edward Van Sloan as all-wise Professor Muller ("Van Sloan is the ideal man for the part," noted Balderston, who of course remembered the actor as Professor Van Helsing in the stage and screen *DRACULA*). Veteran stage star Arthur Byron portrayed Sir Joseph Whemple,

who discovers The Mummy (and later dies under his spell). Bramwell Fletcher, who had played Little Billee to John Barrymore's *SVENGALI* (1931), acted young Norton, the foolhardy archaeologist who reads the "Scroll of Thoth," reviving the Mummy, and explodes into maniacal laughter at the sight: "He went for a little walk!" he laughs, madly and unforgettably, after Im-Ho-Tep's departure (shown only as the Mummy's bandages trailing across the floor). "You should have seen his face!"

Noble Johnson, who had played "Janos, the Black One" in *MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE* and would play the Native Chief in *KING KONG*, signed to play the Nubian, who becomes Im-Ho-Tep's ominous henchman. The studio dispatched a cameraman from its Berlin office to Egypt to photograph backgrounds which, projected on a large screen on a Hollywood sound stage, would give the actors striking backdrops. And international designer Willy Pogany created beautiful sets, full of the mysticism of old Egypt. Shooting began in mid-September, 1932.

A lion's share of publicity celebrated Universal makeup wizard Jack P. Pierce's transfor-

mation of Karloff into the crumbling, tattered Mummy of the opening vignette. Universal lovingly detailed the eight-hour makeup job, which the horror star called "...the most trying ordeal I have ever endured."

11:00 am: "Dear Boris" reported to Pierce's cosmetology sanctuary, where a photograph of King Seti II served as a model. As Karloff sat stoically in the makeup chair, Pierce pinned back his ears, dampened his face and covered it (including eyelids) with thin cotton strips. Collodion covered the cotton; spirit gum secured the tatters; an electric drying machine preserved the desired wrinkles. A special fascination for Pierce was some makeup magic he worked on the tip of Karloff's nose to suggest decay. Karloff's only pleasures during the procedure: a cigarette and tea. The makeup application made speech impossible, and he had to pantomime every time he wanted a fresh smoke.

1:00 pm: Pierce slicked back Karloff's hair and smeared it with beauty clay. As the clay solidified, the makeup artist carved little cracks in it and poured fluid in the cracks to create a serrated effect.

2:00 pm: 22 different colors of makeup paint began covering

the actor's face, hands, arms.

5:00 pm: Pierce wrapped 150-yards of acid-rotten linen (passed through an oven, so it looked decayed) around Karloff. The bandages were taped in the body joints so that the actor could move. Pierce added a dusting of Fuller's earth to his Mummy.

7:00 pm: The transformation was complete. With Pierce at his side, Karloff took a little walk to the sound stage. As "The Mummy" entered, a gasp arose from the entire company. Fortified with a cup of tea from his visiting wife Dorothy, the Englishman took his place in the sarcophagus; the still department had a field day; and Freund shot the resurrection scene—until 2:00am. (There might have been a misadventure Universal did not report: according to the unpublished memoir of Bramwell Fletcher, Karloff collapsed during the night shoot as the incredible makeup cut off his oxygen.)

"Physical exhaustion was nothing compared to the nervous exhaustion I suffered," said Karloff, who didn't get home until dawn. "...I am glad it is over!"

Far less torturous was the painted-on cotton mask that created the shrivelled face of Ardath Bey, the Mummy's bandage-less alter ego; it required only an hour each morning to apply. Still, the makeup had its own unpleasant repercussions—as it had to be melted off each evening!

So superb was Pierce's work that the old *Hollywood Filmograph* journal voted him a magnificent trophy, presented by Karloff himself at a black-tie ceremony. Pierce died in 1968, and the prize was believed lost. Years later, a sink was removed from the old makeup studio at Universal. There, mysteriously and unceremoniously wedged under the sink, was Jack P. Pierce's long-forsaken trophy.

"Karl Freund—that pig!"

—Zita Johann

For Zita Johann, the happiest memory of *THE MUMMY* was working with the star. "Boris Karloff was truly a great gentleman. He minded his own business and was very seclusive,

**“Freund was so sure I’d blow my top,” recalled Johann. “It was his first picture as director: he needed a scapegoat, and he was so sure he had it, in me.”**



Edward Van Sloan (left) and David Manners (2nd from right) look on as Karloff's Im-Ho-Tep (alias Ardath Bey) eyes Zita Johann, the reincarnation of his lost love.

very good, very kind, and very nice! There was in Karloff a hidden sorrow that I sensed and respected—a deep, deep thing. Still, whatever that may have been, there was true respect between us as actors. He was a marvelous person.”

The two stars battled the 18-hour days of *THE MUMMY*, often working past midnight. By the time Boris had melted off his Mummy face and Zita had changed from her costumes, Universal was dark and desolate, coyotes howling high in the mountains as the exhausted players walked to their cars—aware they were expected bright and early the next day.

Karl Freund brilliantly created the film’s “look”; working with cameraman Charles Stumar, he captured an eerie, enchanted vision—as if looking through the eyes of a King Cobra. Karloff, David Manners and some of the company went with Freund for location shooting at Red Rock Canyon, where the director’s day shots (the discovery of Anck-es-en-Amon’s tomb) and night shooting (the torch-lit burial procession) are especially beautiful.

Meanwhile, Zita Johann faced true horror: “One day, when I was walking about on

the Universal lot, I was suddenly accosted by a huge monster. And, without a ‘hello’ or a name—his or mine: ‘In one scene you haff to blay it from the vaist up nood!’ It was Karl Freund, with his heavy accent. I swallowed. My Guardian Angel came to the rescue. I replied to his order that I appear nude from the waist up: ‘It’s all right with me—if you can get it past the censors.’ Freund—so sure I’d blow my top. It was his first picture as a director: he needed a scapegoat; he was looking for his ‘out.’ So sure he had it—in me: ‘Hungarian.’ ‘Temperamental.’ ‘Impossible to handle!’ ‘How could I deal with her?’ ‘Holds up the crew—the shooting! With her temperament!’”

Zita invited Freund and his wife to dinner, where Freund again baited Zita with his desire to film her naked from the waist up. Once again she agreed—if the censors did, too. “So I had him there!” crowed Zita.

It was only one of the “many outbursts and tricks to thwart me” in the repertoire of the 300-pound director: “No chair to sit down between takes. The actors all had chairs with their names painted on the back. My chauffeur was outraged—Sasha, a Russian. ‘Miss Johann, I will

get it for you—chair, downtown. And I will paint it—your name—on back.’ ‘No,’ I replied. ‘No. Please.’ I didn’t want to be conspicuous, and I feared what that might lead to from the windbag, Freund. Besides, I didn’t need the chair. In one scene I was to walk down the street with a dog, and I was to wear a dark suit, very tight-fitting. Do you know that, for two days, I was forced to stand against a board, so there wouldn’t be a crease in the skirt? The windbag’s orders! It took four weeks for me to pass out.”

Zita meanwhile threw herself into the rich role of the tormented Helen, as well as the drama and costumes of the reincarnation scenes: a court lady of 18th century France (whom Zita decided must be Madame Du Barry), “her white-powdered hair built upon her headdress” (according to the script), standing by a fountain of Versailles; a 13th century “Lady of the Castle,” in “tall peaked hat and flowing robes,” with a Crusader kissing her hand; an 8th-century Saxon Princess, in long blonde braids, her stockade falling to the enemy as she took a dagger and stabbed herself in the heart—all wonderful make-believe, made quite horrible, Zita recalled, by the screams of a sadistic director.

Finally, all that was left for Johann was the scene by the “Pool of Life” with Karloff, and the Christian martyr scene—in which she was to be eaten alive by lions. “Late Saturday night—exhausted—I fainted—in the middle of a scene with Boris Karloff. I was out for an

hour—dead. The crew, generally friendly and this time again on my side, gathered beside me. ‘What that son-of-a-bitch has done to her,’ I heard. “You don’t know the half of it,” my secretary, Ruby Holloway, answered. My guardian angel was very busy.”

According to Zita, she had almost fallen into the “Pool of Life” when she fainted. Evermystical, she insisted in all the 14 years I knew her that, just as David Manners called her back to life in the climax of the film, so did the film’s crew call her back from death’s threshold that night: “They couldn’t get a doctor—it was 11 o’clock at night. So the crew prayed me back to consciousness.”

The Christian martyr, fed-to-the-lions scene was set for Monday. Universal had slyly saved this for Zita’s last day of shooting, so that if any of the lions “overacted,” the actress’s other scenes would already be in the can. It was the grand finale of Karl Freund’s sadism: “I rested on Sunday. Monday morning, I was at Universal, on time. And there were the lions! They had this great big enormous arena outside on the back lot, and everybody was protected. Freund was in a special cage all his own (a very large one); the cameraman was safe; the whole crew was safe. No cage for me. I was guided to the huge gate, leading to three enormous lions, Ruby at my side. ‘This you don’t do!’ said the shocked, protective Ruby. I took a deep breath, praying to the Holy Spirit, and to my Guardian Angel, who were already with me,

Johann, as Princess Anck-es-an-Amon, poses on the set of *THE MUMMY* with Karl Freund, a noted cinematographer making his directing debut.





Mehemet Bey (Turhan Bey) orders Kharis (Lon Chaney Jr) to abduct leading lady Elyse Knox, whom the Egyptian priest hopes to join in immortal matrimony.

**“I swear by the mighty power of Amon-Ra, whose anger can shatter the world, and by the dread power of Seth, that I will never betray my trust.”**

in me. ‘He saved this for the last day,’ I said. “Look, I get paid, I’m going in, I don’t care. What difference...?” was all I could say. The gate was opened. I went in. That I remember. The lions were indifferent. My lack of sex appeal, perhaps. Those lions saw no fear in me—just exhausted bones! And they must have figured, “Who needs them?”

*“He is now officially ‘Karloff.’ Gone is the Boris, to that mysterious land where first names go, probably walking happily hand-in-hand with Greta, formerly part of Garbo...”*

—from the *Los Angeles Examiner* review of THE MUMMY, January 21, 1933.

Universal wrapped up THE MUMMY near Halloween 1932 for a final cost of \$196,000

George Zucco, as the evil Andoheb, stole THE MUMMY’S HAND and went on to appear in two sequels.



(about \$100,000 less than the tab for FRANKENSTEIN). James Dietrich composed a beautiful musical score, and on November 29, 1932, Universal previewed THE MUMMY. *Variety* praised the film as “a flock of goose-pimple action” and clocked it at 78 minutes, which means the reincarnation vignettes were probably still in the movie. When Universal officially released THE MUMMY on December 22, 1932, with the star billed on posters as “Karloff the Uncanny” and a running time of 72 minutes, the vignettes were gone.

What happened?

Johann claimed that Carl Laemmle Jr. spitefully cut them after she told him, “Do me a favor. I had a lousy, rotten time at your studio. Don’t pick up my option for another picture.” (“They had to protect Karloff,” she added.) Producer Richard Gordon remembered Karloff saying that Universal cut the scene, due to pacing. Clearly the cuts were made at the 11th hour: the name of Henry Victor, as “Saxon Warrior,” still appears on the cast list of the release version. At any rate, only stills survive of Zita’s various incarnations; Universal made a search for the long-lost scenes in the late 1980s and found nothing. (Also surviving: stills of Zita in her slip and high heels which do not appear in the release print—perhaps a compromise with Freund in lieu of appearing “from the vaist up nood.”)

THE MUMMY opened on Broadway in the first week of January, 1933, at the RKO-Mayfair Theatre. It came com-

plete with a giant display looming over Times Square, showing Karloff in his bandaged Im-Ho-Tep makeup, eyes flashing, the gigantic billboard illuminated nightly in yellow, green and purple lights. The *New York Times* noted the film’s popular appeal: “That there is a place for a national bogey man in the scheme of things was fulsome-ly demonstrated yesterday by the crowds that clicked past the box office...”

Two weeks later THE MUMMY had its Los Angeles premiere at the RKO-Hillstreet Theatre. The *Los Angeles Times* gave a review that must have delighted Universal: “Surely the mantle of the late Lon Chaney will eventually fall upon the actor Karloff, whose portrayal of an unholy thing in this film, aided by magnificent makeup, establishes him as not just a good character actor, but a finished character star.”

Karloff went on to glory. No doubt remembering how he and Johann suffered on THE MUMMY, he became one of the founders of the Screen Actors Guild. THE MUMMY is believed by many to be the masterpiece performance of the legendary star, who died in 1969.

Zita Johann appeared in only a handful of films in the early 1930s. She divorced John Houseman (and two later husbands), returned to the stage, and eventually devoted her later years to helping the handicapped. She remained a devout believer in reincarnation; indeed, she believed she had died in her pre-Revolutionary war house in a previous life. Zita Johann died (again?) in 1993 at the age of 89.

Karl Freund directed another half-dozen films at Universal, moved to MGM (where he directed the 1935 horror classic MAD LOVE), then returned to cinematography—winning the Oscar for his work on MGM’s

THE GOOD EARTH (1937). He also was a pioneering TV cameraman for I LOVE LUCY and the Desilu shows. “Papa” died in 1969.

John L. Balderston contributed to such horror scripts as MARK OF THE VAMPIRE, BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, and MAD LOVE. “He liked working on horror films for a while,” says John Balderston III of his father, “but I think he was very glad to get out of it. He was a great reader of classic literature, and his main interest, really, was doing classic books—like THE PRISONER OF ZENDA [1937].” (He also wrote a few scenes for GONE WITH THE WIND.)

Not long before his death he won a law suit against Universal, demanding royalties from the FRANKENSTEIN sequels, and sharing them with the nephew of Peggy Webling (whose play he had adapted for Universal). Balderston died in 1954 in Beverly Hills and is buried in the family Quaker cemetery in Coloma, Maryland.

*THE MUMMY, starring Boris Karloff—which you must rent—is fine because you see only a single strand*

Chaney’s Kharis reaches for Ramsay Ames in THE MUMMY’S GHOST.



of his unravelled tomb-wrapping trailing in the dust. It is a love story that will exist long after we have settled on the moon and gone to Mars.

—Ray Bradbury,  
“The Birth of the Boos,”  
TV Guide  
(October 23, 1993)

Why the enduring popularity of THE MUMMY? Sixty-seven years later, it remains possibly Hollywood’s most macabre love story. There’s a lushly Romantic aura to the tale of a man who suffered through the centuries, a tortured soul on fire for the woman he loved (an element later incorporated into BRAM STOKER’S DRACULA). There’s even a touch of Feminist agenda that gives the vintage film a modern spice: At the climax, “the great night of terror and triumph,” Helen—dressed up by Ardath Bey in wig and gown and headdress—escapes his dagger and throws herself at a statue of the Egyptian goddess Isis to pray for her safety. The statue comes alive. There’s a blinding flash of light; Im-Ho-Tep begins to shrivel and crack; Helen awakens in the arms of a young lover. Karl Freund sweeps the camera to a pile of bones, and we see the skull of Ardath Bey, grinning forlornly, almost masochistically under his fez. The villain is literally dirt at the heroine’s feet.

In March of 1997, THE MUMMY made history as Sotheby’s auctioned an original one-sheet for the all-time record

John Carradine, as the most recent priest of Ananka, looks on.



Tom Tyler’s features are clearly visible beneath the Jack Pierce makeup as Kharis claims a victim in THE MUMMY’S HAND.

sum of \$453,000—topping the \$198,000 previously paid for a FRANKENSTEIN one-sheet. And on the beautiful one-sheet of THE MUMMY, of course, are the screen’s most fascinating lovers: Im-Ho-Tep and Anck-es-en-Amon.

*“I swear by the mighty power of Amon-Ra, whose anger can shatter the world, and by the dread power of Seth, that I will never betray my trust as a high priest of Karnak!”*

—George Zucco as Andoheb  
in THE MUMMY’S HAND  
(1940)

THE MUMMY is a classic, a dreamy reincarnation romance, one of Hollywood’s great fantasy films. Comparing it to Universal’s sequels of the 1940s is like comparing Ancient Egypt to Newark. Yet what horror buff can claim not to enjoy these crazy, 60-minute sequels, with their comic book-style folklore? “Kharis” (no longer Im-Ho-Tep) was first played by Tom Tyler in THE MUMMY’S HAND (1940); after a roasting, he returned as Lon Chaney Jr. (now with only one eye to match his one good arm and one good leg) in THE MUMMY’S TOMB (1942), THE MUMMY’S GHOST (1944), and THE MUMMY’S CURSE (1945). There was something sadly appealing and wonderfully spooky about

3000-year old Kharis—that love-lorn ragbag, stalking across Universal’s back lot under a full moon, performing his weird, shuffling, melancholy dance to the rhapsodic strains of Hans J. Salter’s music.

What was Kharis’ special charm? Perhaps it was his devotion, as he sought to fulfill his destiny for Amon-ra. Maybe it was his bad luck: he had the misfortune to be entrusted to a leering-eyed parade of Egyptian priests and acolytes, all of whom betrayed Kharis in hopes of joys of the flesh. However, for fans of the series, there was one absolute: Kharis had an incredible fetish for carrying off heroines in negligees.

First came THE MUMMY’S HAND, which began shooting in the late Spring of 1940 on an \$80,000 budget, under the break-neck pacing of director Christy Cabanne. Padded with footage from THE MUMMY, this sequel, scripted by Griffin Jay and Maxwell Shane, offered its own legend—crooned by dying, ancient high priest Eduardo Ciannelli as he passed on the legacy to his successor (George Zucco): including the tana leaves that gave the Mummy life; and this tidbit, that explained the mute Kharis: “they cut out his tongue—so the ears of the gods would not be assailed by his unholy curses!”

The title role went to Tom Tyler, a B-movie cowboy who

had turned villain in John Ford’s 1939 STAGECOACH. Tyler faced the Jack P. Pierce Mummy makeup—streamlined for the 1940s sequels, but still formidable—for one day of close-ups, while a mask was used for long-shots. A nice rotoscope effect by Jack Fulton gave Kharis eyes that looked like glittering black holes. (The stiffness Tyler played was tragically prophetic: he died in 1954 at age 50, following years of crippling arthritis.)

This time, the heroine in the negligee was Peggy Moran. She told me in 1993: “Because we did THE MUMMY’S HAND so fast, and I was pushed from one picture to the other so quickly, I never actual-

Writer John Balderston, whose credits include FRANKENSTEIN, crafted the script for THE MUMMY.



ly met the actor Tom Tyler without his makeup on. He had to come in at four in the morning, I think, to the makeup man to get 'bound up' and all that. By the time he had all the makeup on, he couldn't talk.... we sort of nodded to each other. So I was really kind of afraid of him, you know? He gave me an eerie feeling! You'd rehearse your lines at home, but you can't rehearse a scream—the neighbors would hear you, or something! So, I remember I didn't know what I was going to do about the scream. Well,



Virginia Christine, looking like a female Mummy, rises from the swamp at the beginning of *THE MUMMY'S CURSE*, before becoming a vampy femme fatale.

Still, the film was successful enough to launch a franchise.

*"The bullet fired into me, only crushed my arm. The fire that sought to consume Kharis, only seared and twisted and maimed!"*

Thus does George Zucco rasp in *THE MUMMY'S TOMB* (1942), as the aged Andoheb, 30 years later, dispatches young high priest Turhan Bey to escort the Mummy to New England for revenge against the defilers. This time, the Mummy took form as Lon Chaney Jr., Universal's "Master character creator," fresh from starring as *THE WOLF MAN* and playing the Monster in *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN*. The body count includes *THE MUMMY'S HAND*'s Dick Foran and Wallace Ford, both reprising their original characters (in 30-years-later age makeup). Chaney Jr. made an ominous one-eyed Kharis, and would headline the remainder of the series; however, he hated the makeup, claiming the rubber mask gave him an allergy and no chance to act. The troubled "Mummy" retaliated with drinking and temper tantrums that would become the stuff of Universal legend.

The leading lady-in-the-negligee in *TOMB* was Elyse Knox; the director was Harold Young. The finale found Kharis roasting in a blazing New England house. *TOMB* opened October 24, 1942 at New York's Rialto Theatre, and the *New*

*York Times* gave a predictably snide assessment: "[Universal] has resorted to a hoax which we hereby unmask for the sake of the unsuspecting public. In 1932, *THE MUMMY* was declared to be Boris Karloff; in 1940 and *THE MUMMY'S HAND*, it was Tom Tyler. Now in *THE MUMMY'S TOMB* at the Rialto, it is Lon Chaney Jr. Obviously a couple of these boys are imposters...*THE MUMMY* came to a bad end before, but somehow survived in the person of Mr. Chaney. For all we know, he will bob up again as Bela Lugosi..."

Nevertheless, the film was another box office hit, and come the Summer of 1943, Chaney's Mummy was amok once more—this time in *THE MUMMY'S GHOST* (released in the Summer of 1944). Now ancient, ever-trembling Zucco gave his amulet to new Egyptian high priest John Carradine, sending him to New England to

rendezvous with Chaney's Kharis—to find the reincarnation of the Princess Ananka, fortuitously reborn as shapely co-ed Ramsay Ames. Reginald Le Borg directed nimbly, with some nice touches: those sexy white streaks in the brunette hair of the lush Miss Ames, becoming more white whenever *The Mummy* ambled by; the mining shack high above trestles where Chaney's Mummy and Carradine's high priest hide out; and a downbeat finale, with a torch-bearing posse chasing pudgy Kharis and his "Ananka" (night-gowned naturally, and aging into a crone a la *Lost Horizon*) into the muck of a swamp—the leading lady perishing before the eyes of the leading man (Robert Lowery).

Chaney was trouble on *THE MUMMY'S GHOST*. "I itch and I can't scratch!" he moaned to a reporter amidst the back lot heat of the San Fernando Valley, claiming that people who paid to see Mummy movies were "nuts." Reginald Le Borg became all-too-familiar with Chaney's drinking problems ("I tried to shoot everything with him in the morning, because I knew in the afternoon, it would be tougher"); he also had to control a Mummy sometimes carried away by his own monstrousness—as when strangling the old professor, played by Frank Reicher. Le Borg (who died in 1989) told me, "You know the scene: the Mummy puts his hand on his neck, and Reicher sinks down. Well, we at the camera couldn't see the face of Reicher, because Chaney was hunched over him, and he was very big in his Mummy



we shot the scenes I had to do with him on the back lot of Universal, with caves there, at night, sometimes at midnight! And when he picked me up, and I had to look up at him and scream, I had no problem—that I do remember!"

Upstaging the Mummy was George Zucco, marvelously sinister as Andoheb, high priest of Karnak. He set the standard of lechery for future Karnak high priests: leering at Peggy Moran with his pinball eyes illuminated as he offers her (and himself) eternal life while she lies helpless in his temple (a leftover set from James Whale's 1940 *GREEN HELL*). Heroes Dick Foran and Wallace Ford come to the rescue: Zucco is shot and tumbles down the temple steps. The Mummy burns.

Produced at \$84,000 (\$4000 over budget!), the film opened at New York's Rialto Theatre September 19, 1940. The *New York Times* reported: "It's the usual mumbo-jumbo of secret tombs in crumbling temples and salacious old high priests... Once or twice Miss Moran makes a grimace—as if she had caught an unpleasant odor—and screams.... Frightening or funny, take your choice"

In between takes on *THE MUMMY'S CURSE* (1944), Chaney tries to beat the heat by lying with his head in the refrigerator of his dressing room.



**“The Mummy was to carry me,” said Christine. “We start, and he’s weaving side-to-side. They took Chaney out, put the stunt man in—and I was relieved!”**

outfit. But after I said ‘Cut!’—Reicher very nearly was unconscious! He was moaning on the floor. We rushed to get Reicher up, and he said, ‘He nearly killed me!’ Chaney had just become carried away—he was putting everything he had into the monster. Luckily, Reicher didn’t complain. He was an older man, nice; he knew Chaney was the star, and he let it go. We massaged his neck and gave him some water. But the next day, when I saw him again, I spied a look at Reicher’s neck, and you could see he had spots there, from the strangling!”

THE MUMMY’S GHOST came-a-shuffling into New York’s Rialto Theatre June 30, 1944. The critics were especially aghast this time, with the *New York World-Telegram* reporting: “The Mummy has always been the least impressive of movie monsters and he is doing nothing to enhance his reputation in his latest incarnation.... He is just repulsive without being picturesque or even particularly frightening...Let’s hope that this time those Egyptians are satisfied and let their old mummy stay dead.”

The Mummy did rise again, but GHOST proved the last in the series for George Zucco, who died in 1960. Incidentally, Zucco’s widow, looking forward to her 99th birthday as of this writing, is no fan of the series. “I hated those Mummy movies,” Stella Zucco told me in 1998. “They weren’t good enough for George!”

*“Resurrected in Horror! Rising out of Death! Egypt’s Ancient Lovers... Live Again in Evil!...to fulfill The Mummy’s Curse...”*

—from the preview trailer.

A hand rises out of the mud, reaching toward the sun. The quagmire quivers, and there arises a female mummy, with a

face like the Sphinx, horrifically caked with mud, stretching, jerking and falling as she escapes her boggy grave. Vanity prevails, and the female mummy makes for a pool to bathe away her full-length mudpack. Glamorously, she emerges, in sexy black wig, clingy white nightgown and 1944 false eyelashes, as the oomphy reincarnation of Princess Ananka.

“I loved myself in that black wig,” laughed blonde Virginia Christine, of her Ananka ‘look’. “I thought I was smashing!”

THE MUMMY’S CURSE began shooting at Universal on July 26, 1944, on a \$123,000 budget and a 12-day schedule. Chaney was back as Kharis; Dennis Moore and Kay Harding were the love interest; Peter Coe was the high priest, and Martin Kosleck (“I am but flesh and blood!”) his lustful acolyte. The truly flashy part this time was the back-from-the-bog female mummy Ananka, requiring an actress versatile enough to play a resurrected mummy, beautiful enough to score as the “new” Ananka, and trouper enough to be willing to be buried in a swamp.

Virginia Christine filled the bill—at a salary of \$250 per week. Miss Christine told me in 1986, “Before I could be okayed for the part, I had to go see Jack Pierce, the head of the makeup department, and he had to look at the contours of my face and see if he could make a mummy out of me. Jack was a big braggadocio—he did create all the Franksteins, and was a master of the monster pictures—and he wanted the news to go around that he was about to do something new. So they saved that rejuvenation shot for the last day of shooting, so in case they killed me off, everything would be in the can! And Jack kept saying, all through the picture, ‘Virginia, don’t you worry about your skin at all in



Kharis (Chaney) abducts the reincarnation of Princess Ananka (Virginia Christine) in Universal’s last serious Mummy sequel.

the female mummy makeup. I’m using something different—just don’t you worry.”

It was uncanny how Mummy history was repeating itself on the Universal lot. On THE MUMMY, Karl Freund had waited until Zita Johann’s last day to shoot her scene with the lions. Twelve years later, the studio was saving for the last day Ananka’s rising from the dead—in which Virginia would have to wear the Jack Pierce mystery makeup and be buried alive in a back lot bog. (Incidentally, while the Mummy and Ananka had perished in a New England swamp in GHOST, she would rise down south, in Cajun territory, supposedly 25 years later—which means the film should be set in the 1990s!)

As shooting began under Leslie Goodwins’ direction, Virginia Christine had more to worry about than just mummy makeup. There were far worse ways to earn \$8000 in 1944 than starring as the Mummy, yet Lon Chaney was miserable, retreating to his dressing room bungalow between scenes to sprawl on the floor under his open refrigerator. And he had a thirst for more than just tana leaves. There came a shot on the back lot where Chaney’s drinking could have caused a terrible accident, as Virginia Christine recalled: “Chaney had asked that they design a strap that went around his neck and around her waist to take some of the weight off his arms. One day on the back lot, we were doing this shot in which the Mummy was to carry me to the old shrine, up these steep,

crooked, worn steps. They were hard enough to navigate if you were sober. And there I was, with this strap attached to my waist, around Lon Chaney’s neck, starting up these steps—and he is absolutely stoned. I always hate, when they’re gone, to say bad things, but it was an actual fact: Chaney was pretty much stoned throughout the picture! We start up, and he’s weaving side-to-side on these uneven steps. Chaney was a big guy, and if he fell down, with me attached to him, I hate to think what would have happened! Finally, the director, Leslie Goodwins, said ‘Cut!’ and they took Chaney out of the Mummy suit, and put the stand-in into it. So he carried me up—and I was enormously relieved!”

Shooting quickly on back lot sites (the GUNG HO! jungle set, the “Singapore Street,” and Pollard Lake), CURSE unofficially wrapped August 10, two days over schedule and with one vital scene unshot: Ananka’s rising from the swamp. The scene was finally shot August 21, 1944, and Virginia remembered the ominous eve of shooting: “Well! By the time we came to the last day of shooting, I was a wreck, and my husband, Fritz Feld, called Jack Pierce at night, at home, and said, ‘Jack! Please! Tell me what it is you’re going to do to Virginia tomorrow!’ And Jack

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# THE MUMMY

## WALKS AGAIN!

**Hammer Films served up blood, curses, and tombs in their revamped series of ancient Egyptian epics.**

**H**ammer's Mummy films stretch from the company's inventive early days of the 1950s through its most productive but derivative heyday, into an era of frantic competition in a declining market. Three of them are at least modestly entertaining. The first is arguably the best mummy movie that Hammer—or anyone else—ever made.

In the wake of their two successful remakes of Gothic classics (*CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* and *HORROR OF DRACULA*), England's Hammer Films was in demand by major distributors. Universal had a major hit distributing the later film, and their catalogue was ripe with potential. *THE WOLF MAN*, *THE INVISIBLE MAN*, and *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* were considered too elaborate, but *THE MUMMY* was manageable. The company reunited the Dracula-Frankenstein team of actors Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, director Terence Fisher, and the tight production unit at Bray Studios.

The 36-year-old producer of *CURSE* and *HORROR*, Anthony Hinds, was less than enthusiastic. He deferred to 31-year-old Michael Carreras, executive producer on the previous remakes. "By then, Tony was rather steeped in the 'true Gothics,' and it's true, *THE MUMMY* is a bit more romantic, a bit more adventurous, a bit more colorful," said Carreras in the video documentary *FLESH &*

By Ted Newsom



Christopher Lee as Kharis in the flashback from Hammer's 1959 *MUMMY* remake.

**BLOOD.**

Carreras sat through the original films to create a plot template. He and screenwriter Jimmy Sangster synthesized the ultimate Kharis film, combining components of the 1932 original and *THE MUMMY'S TOMB* with bits from the later films. Relocation from Egypt to a less exotic (and less expensive) locale allowed the company to use the manor house at Bray and its bucolic environs.

The Karloff film provided a character name (Joseph Whemple), a man driven mad when he revives the long-dead mummy, and the still-startling shot of the priest's wide-eyed horror as he is buried alive. The last two Chaney films provided the image of Kharis rising from

the bog (implied offscreen in *THE MUMMY'S CURSE*) and carrying his beautiful victim into the swamp in the climax. Reincarnation, so central to the Karloff original, is here a case of mistaken identity. Kharis assumes that John Banning's wife Isobel is Ananka reborn, but the resemblance is coincidental. Not only does poor Kharis linger in living death for 3,000 years for her sake, he doesn't even get the girl in the end. In tune with their previous remakes, Hammer set the story in the Victorian era. Costumes and sets were sumptuous, particularly in the flashback of ancient Egypt.

"The real stars of Hammer," opined Christopher Lee, "were people like Bernard Robinson,

the art director. It's a beautiful film. It looked like a multi-million dollar production—which, I assure you, it was not!"

Cushing came up with a bit of business inspired by fairness. "I saw a poster that showed the mummy walking through the fog, with a light shining through a great hole in his body. Quite striking, although it did look like he had a car headlamp on or something. But there was nothing like that in the script! I had a word with publicity chaps, who said, 'Oh that's just to grab the audience, just to fool them.' I said, 'Christopher Lee and I are in it—that's good enough. We don't need to fool them. And, as the poster's out already, we must do something about it.' In the script, my character, John Banning, has this big ding-dong with Christopher. I said to Terry Fisher, 'He's an archeologist, he'd have relics of his expeditions in the study, so let's have a harpoon on the wall—I'll grab that and thrust it through my dear old chum.' At least then we had some sort of reason for that light shining through that mummy on the poster."

As in *HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*, made four months previous, a plot device lays up Cushing's character with a leg injury. "I don't know why it's in *HOUND*. It didn't add or take anything away," Cushing recalled. "But in *THE MUMMY*, if young Banning had been able to get around in Egypt, he might've been able to know what was going on in





Above: Kharis, now a mummy, mistakes Isobel Banning (Yvonne Ferneaux) for the reincarnation of his lost Princess Ananka, and carries her into the swamp.  
Below left: the Mummy awakens in his tomb. Below right: Mehemet Akir (George Pastell) prepares to send the Mummy out to kill those who defiled his tomb.





Above: Eddie Powell's Mummy attacks Sir Basil Walden (Andre Morell) in *THE MUMMY'S SHROUD* (1967). Roy Ashton's rather unusual makeup for the character is based on an actual mummy on display in the British Museum (below).



those tombs, so we made the decision to have young Banning sort of hors d'combat."

Hammer chairman James Carreras got a negative pick-up deal of £125,000 (about \$400,000) from Universal, a healthy increase from the £81,000 *DRACULA* cost a year before, but Hammer would be due nothing after this initial buy-out. Filming lasted for 37 days beginning on February 25,

1959, divided between Bray and the larger Shepperton Studios. For Hammer's *YESTERDAY'S ENEMY*, Bernard Robinson had created a Burmese jungle swamp on Shepperton's Stage Three. Lit by cameraman Jack Asher with splashes of red and green, it became a moody moor, hampered only by the obvious cyclorama. The 'desert' exteriors were also shot at Shepperton, which

added visual breadth but gave the dialogue the hollow resonance of a sound stage.

"There was an awfully good Irish actor in it, Eddie Byrne, who played the inspector," said Cushing 30 years later. "I thought he was so good. We're both in *STAR WARS*, you know, although we had no scenes together. And the ubiquitous Michael Ripper! I don't think I ever did a picture that he

wasn't in!" (The pop-eyed Ripper did a small bit as a mendacious poacher.)

Cushing's banter with dubious Byrne (who later that year played a similar role in *JACK THE RIPPER*, also scripted by Sangster) and his low-key confrontation with new neighbor Mehemet Akir (George Pastell) are masterly. Their cat-and-mouse verbal duel is layered with underplayed double-entendres, many of which were rewritten by Cushing and Pastell prior to shooting.

Suggested by Turhan Bey's role in *TOMB*, Mehemet becomes far more than a stock villain. Greek-born Pastell's mellifluous voice rarely rises above a calm murmur, yet expresses sincerity, understated menace, and sad fatalism when he realizes he may never return home. Rarely given a role as juicy as this, Pastell had played the Yul Brynner role in the West End version of *The King and I*. He later led the Thuggee cult in *STRANGLERS OF BOMBAY*, appeared as ape fodder in *KONGA*, and even re-voiced Woody Strode in *TARZAN'S THREE CHALLENGES*.

As he had done with Frankenstein's creation and Count Dracula, Lee created an original, dynamic Kharis. Gone was the shuffling zombie of Tyler and Chaney. Lee developed an awkward gait for Kharis' first scenes, as if the limbs were animated by a power unfamiliar to them. Later, he modified this into unstoppable force, striding through the night, ripping iron bars and smashing doors. Never before or since has Lee's 6'4" height been so emphasized, accented by Asher's ingenious camera angles. At times, the Mummy appears twice as tall as Pastell. Lee's frequent stunt double Eddie Powell did the final shot of the Mummy sinking into the mire, but otherwise all the stunts were performed by the actor.

"I did things in that film that Arnold Schwarzenegger would refuse to do, and rightly so!" recalled Lee. "I crashed through glass doors—real glass, not sugar glass from the prop shop—so I got splinters all over my body. Squibs from shotgun blasts left bruises on my chest for weeks. I pulled every mus-

## THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB

**"I liked it," said Hammer's Michael Carreras of his directing debut. "And actually, the only Gothics I personally made at Hammer were the two Mummies, or was it three?"**

cle in my back carrying Yvonne Furneaux, 110 pounds (at least) of inert femininity, several hundred yards, absolutely dead weight, take after take. When I was walking through the swamp set, I would constantly bang my shin and knee against the pipes hidden beneath this objectionable liquid, and that would cause a great deal of foul language to issue from beneath my mask, which caused the crew no end of amusement. And when I crashed through a front door, I dislocated my shoulder. I can see why the Mummy wasn't Lon Chaney, Jr.'s favorite role."

Makeup man Roy Ashton created a one-piece mask that left only Lee's eyes mobile. His expressive mime projected myriad emotions from a character heretofore one-dimensional, a performance buttressed by a remarkable number of costume variations. The first sight of the Mummy is the stuff that nightmares are made of: a dark form rising out of a swamp, arms folded across its chest. In later scenes, Lee's bandages are browned with crusted swamp slop. When he is accidentally brought to life in the tomb, the one-piece costume is subtly aged from the ancient Egypt se-

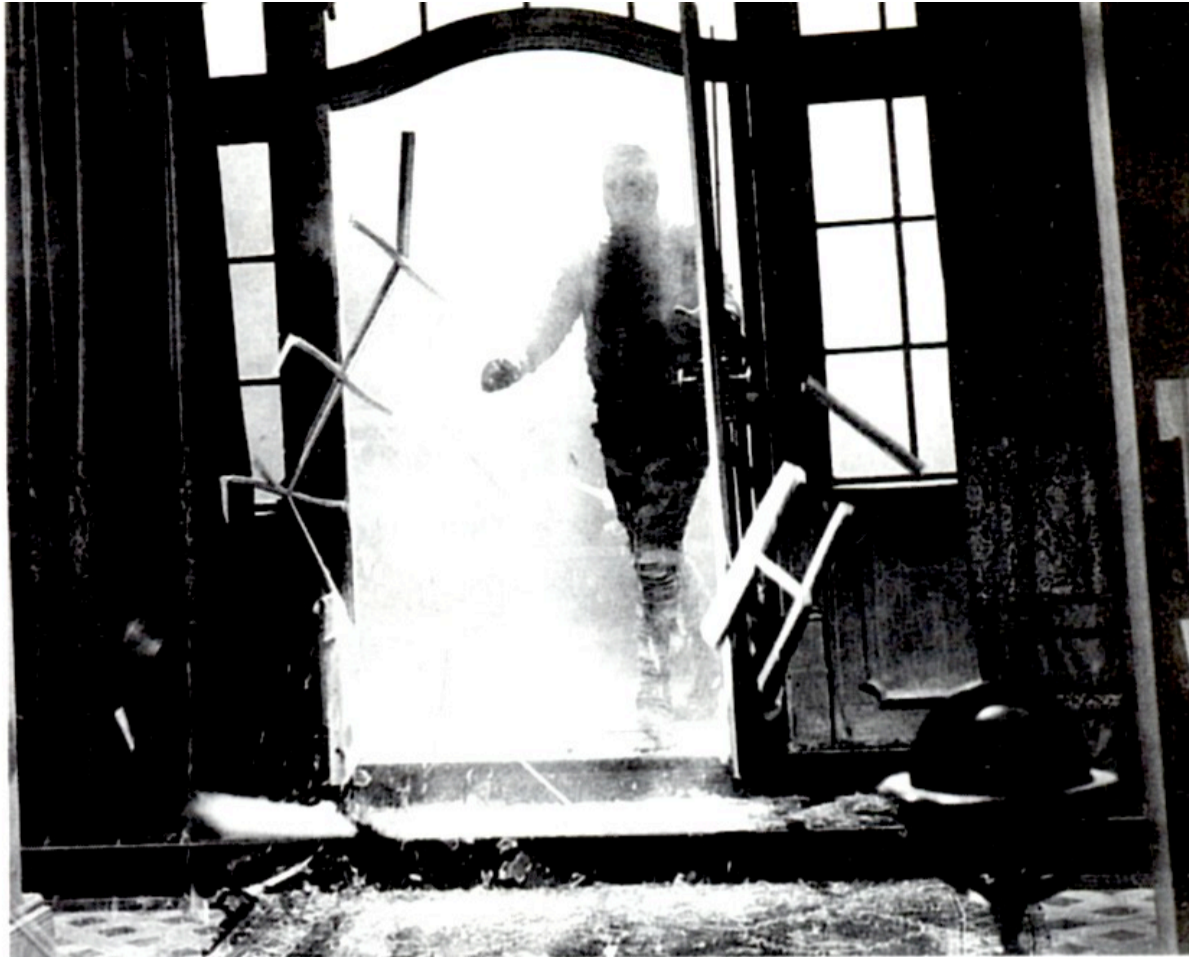
quence, in which the bandages sensibly appear fresh.

As the human Kharis, Lee not only looks regal and resplendent in high priest gear, he gives the funereal invocations an air of desperate personal loss. In the same scene, Ananka's linen-draped handmaidens were shot topless for the "spicy Continental version." Fisher also shot an insert of Kharis' tongue ripped from his mouth, but it was wisely cut. Instead, Fisher dollies into a two-shot reaction shot of the Nubian slaves. Coupled with Lee's off-screen gasp and a sudden drop out of the music, the imagination fills in the blank. (In 1964, *BLOOD FEAST* replicated the scene with graphic gore, to less effect).

Composer Fritz Reizenstein's evocative score perfectly underlines the suspense and horror as well as the majesty of Egypt. An ethereal choir complemented his use of lush, nervous strings and insistent brass. (Reizenstein would compose a similar score for *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*.)

The patchwork script occasionally results in an untidy time flow. The story begins in Egypt in 1895, dissolves forward three

In *CURSE*, the Mummy (Dickie Owen) is distracted from attacking ingenue Jeanne Roland by the appearance of his immortal brother (Terence Morgan).



**THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB (1964) borrows a scene from THE MUMMY: the ancient Egyptian crashes through a window into an ornate Victorian milieu.**

years to England, goes into an extended flashback to 3,000 B.C., back to England in 1898, then tosses in a recap to action three years before in Egypt, then back to 1898 again for the denouement. For some reason, Sangster dubs the fictitious ancient god "Karnak" (instead of Universal's "Arkan"), the name of a real locale familiar to many because of English military action there in World War II—and associated with Johnny Carson's comedy mind-reading act.

A favorable review in *Time* prompted ancient Nina Wilcox Putnam to complain that her story had been debased from its original form. Nothing ever came of her threatened legal action. In any case, her yarn of death rays, master criminal hypnotists and serial reincarnation had little to do with the Hammer film. (One wonders where she had been during the Chaney dynasty.)

The picture was successful world-wide, getting theatrical play dates for Universal as late as 1964. However, Hammer was unhappy with the buyout (other studios offered co-ownership), and the distributor eventually became dissatisfied with the grosses of films like *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* and *SECRET OF BLOOD ISLAND*. The two companies parted by 1964.

By then Michael Carreras had quit the company, never having seen eye to eye with his

father or the company direction. Having produced a musical and a western, neither of which set the world on fire, Michael struck a low-paying deal (£8000) as director and producer, adapting a story written with Universal in mind. Since the project was now destined for Columbia release, this precluded using plot points from the Universal series—not a problem, since Hammer looted the tomb of Kharis thoroughly in 1959.

Carreras split a minimal £2,000 rewrite fee with Alvin Rakoff (later hired by Hammer to direct *THE ANNIVERSARY*, then fired by irascible Bette Davis). Credit goes to 'Henry Younger.' "That was me," chuckled Carreras. "Tony Hinds was 'John Elder,' and since I was younger, I thought I'd make a very small joke. Tony wasn't laughing."

Envisioned in James Carreras' hyperbolic fashion as a 20-foot monster battling planes and tanks, the Mummy shrank to normal size in the Carreras-Rakoff rewrite, and they added several twists. The ostensible romantic lead turns out to be the cursed brother of the undead Mummy, a 'Flying Dutchman' wandering throughout eternity. They reprised the scene in which the Mummy crashes through glass doors, but added grisly original touches like a loyal Egyptian (George Pastel, in a far more modest role) willingly kowtowing so the Mummy can crush his skull like a





In *THE MUMMY*, Lee's dynamic Kharis attacks Dr. Banning (Peter Cushing), erasing any memories of Universal's lumbering, slow-moving character.

## MAKING THE MUMMY DANCE

**"I crashed through glass, got splinters all over my body, and squibs left bruises on my chest," said Lee. "I can see why the Mummy wasn't Lon Chaney Jr.'s favorite role!"**

(*THE REPTILE* and *PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES*): yet another expedition uncovers the withered corpse of a boy Pharaoh and his titular shroud, guarded by his ancient slave Prem, who is inflamed to vengeance by a snarling Egyptian and his aged crone of a mother.

Roy Ashton's relatively inventive design for this walking corpse was patterned on a relic still displayed in the British Museum, with triangular patches on the face and braided arm patterns. But like Ashton's previous Mummy, the character is nearly expressionless since the eyes are not visible—except in the rare close-ups, which too clearly reveals the edges of the latex mask. It didn't matter. Like series monsters from Frankenstein to Freddie, the Mummy had ceased to be a character and had instead become a murder machine.

Alumni from the previous movies dotted the production landscape. Uncredited, Peter Cushing narrated the extended prologue, in which Dickie Owen played Prem; stunt man Eddie Powell played Prem under wraps. Michael Ripper had a substantial role as the myopic

secretary to the pompous nabob played broadly by John Phillips. Phillips was the epitome of subtlety compared to Roger Delgado as the sneering high priest, and even he is topped by elderly Catherine Lacey (Karloff's wife in *THE SORCERORS*). As a seedy seeress incongruously named 'Haiti,' she literally drools and cackles her way through the film. The leads were serviceable and a bit subtler. At the last minute, David Buck replaced John Richardson (*SHE* and *ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.*); blonde Maggie Kimberly acquitted herself well, despite the indignity of publicity stills showing her percolating out of a filmy nightgown which she doesn't wear in the film.

Gilling's visual elán and a musical score from Don Banks (*EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN*) makes *THE MUMMY'S SHROUD* a better genre film than its 1967 competition, but offered few surprises. Not long afterward, Tony Hinds sold his share of Hammer to James Carreras and left filmmaking, writing occasional scripts. Carreras requested another Mummy yarn in 1970, but Hinds demurred.

There was no mummy in *BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB*, but Valerie Leon, as the reincarnation of an evil Egyptian goddess, was ample compensation.



snail shell.

"I liked it," said Carreras. "I don't know anybody who wouldn't love directing. And actually, the only Gothics I personally made at Hammer were the two Mummies—or was it three?"

Given 24 shooting days (two weeks less than the first film), Carreras maximized Bernard Robinson's sets with judicious use of fog and Techniscope, a cut-rate widescreen process, used by cinematographer Otto Heller. (Hammer had ceased using Jack Asher; they felt his exquisite photography took too long.)

Musical director Philip Martell cut costs by tracking in sections of Reizenstein's 1959 score, reducing the quantity of new music needed from Carlo Martelli.

Gone was Lee's fast-moving demon. Stunt man Dickie Owen had height and bulk, but was no actor. Even if he had been, Roy Ashton's dreary mask allowed for no expression. This bandaged avenger doesn't seem so much ancient as he does middle-aged: slow moving, pot-bellied, with hands like plaster mittens and an immobile face like an elongated Pillsbury Dough-Boy.

Terence Morgan played the enigmatic hero, opposite the bland but reasonably priced Ronald Howard. Model Jeanne Roland does as well as can be expected as maiden-in-distress. A turn by American actor Fred Clark (no relation to *CFQ*'s publisher!) as the Barnumesque showman evoked William Castle, who had remade *OLD, DARK HOUSE* with Hammer two years before. Columbia even tried to emulate Castle's gimmicks when they sent the film out on a double bill with *THE GORGON*, promoting the combo with "black stamps" and a goofy TV jingle ("The Curse, the Curse, the Curse of the Mum-my's Tomb, and the Gorr-gon—Yeah!").

Equally dizzy was the slogan for Hammer's third Egyptian venture: "Beware the beat of the cloth-wrapped feet!" warned the 20th Century-Fox ads. Made in late 1966, *THE MUMMY'S SHROUD* was designed to support *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN* and was Hammer's last production at Bray before becoming a tenant at the more impersonal Elstree Studios. Tony Hinds' uninspired story (unrelated to previous films) was expanded into a script by director John Gilling

**B**y the early 1970s, without Michael Carreras or Tony Hinds to generate in-house projects, James Carreras (now Sir James) accepted proposals by outsiders like Wilbur Stark (VAMPIRE CIRCUS), Harry Fine & Michael Style (the Karnstein trilogy) and Brian Clemens & Albert Fennell (CAPTAIN KRONOS). American publicist Howard Brandy offered a treatment he had created with Christopher Wicking, based on Bram Stoker's *Jewel of the Seven Stars*, reprising theological conflicts such as Wicking had infused into his rewrite of CRY OF THE BANSHEE, plus a heavy dollop of sex and gore.

Sir James thought the story marketable, if it had a 'proper' title. From a list of interchangeable buzzwords like *Curse*, *Horror*, *Ghost*, and *Evil*, the project came to be called BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB. There was a tomb; there was a little blood. But: "It was a Mummy movie without a Mummy," laughed Brandy years later. "I thought that was the greatest gimmick in the world! Actually, there is a Mummy, when the girl's been hurt and you don't know whether she's herself or Queen Tara. The last shot, with her wrapped in bandages in the hospital—that's our only 'mummy' shot."

Sir James assigned his production manager Roy Skeggs to shepherd the project. "Roy made that film happen," said Brandy. "He kept it all together, really did all the work. It wouldn't have happened without him."

Said Skeggs, now chairman of Hammer, "I see Howard every time I'm in Los Angeles, but I think he'd be the first to admit he'd never done anything like this. I didn't make anything over my usual salary on the film, and, as it turned out, it just became a nightmare."

Wicking trimmed the religious contrasts and the sex and gore quotient. Peter Cushing was cast as an archeologist whose discovery of a tomb of an ancient queen coincided with the death of his wife in childbirth. His grown daughter appears to be destined to be the vessel for the reborn Queen



An unusual scene from THE CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB: the police attempt to capture the Mummy in a net.

Tara. Buxom, 5' 11" Valerie Leon played the double role.

After considering directors Gordon Hessler and Peter Duffel, Hammer chose 47-year-old Seth Holt, who had made the company's best thriller, TASTE OF FEAR and wrangled Bette Davis in THE NANNY. Unfortunately, Holt's profuse drinking had begun to hamper his career, his health, and perhaps his thinking. A week before filming began, Sir James re-hired his son to supervise production in general. "I went to dinner with Seth, and he told me the story of the film," said Michael Carreras. "He seemed very keen on it, and it all sounded fine."

Shooting began on January 11, 1971. Late that day, Cushing did what he had never done before: he asked to be released from a picture. His wife Helen was dying of emphysema. Holt shot around the character while Hammer negotiated with Andrew Keir, the Scots actor who had starred in QUATERMASS & THE PIT in 1967. "I think it had been written with Peter in mind, but in any case, I tried to play it the way he might've. As a result, I don't think my performance was good. I had no time

to prepare properly," said Keir, who started work a week later.

The dilemmas didn't stop there. "Valerie Leon took a bad fall on the set, too," said Brandy. "A chair just collapsed for no apparent reason."

"The director had hiccups for a week," recalled Leon on a recent BBC show. "We'd sit in on rushes, and he'd go 'Eep!' We thought it was very funny."

The hiccups were a symptom of something more serious. Five weeks into the six-week schedule, Holt died of a heart attack. Several crew members quit out of loyalty to Holt.

Carreras again suspended production. Screening Holt's erratic footage, Carreras realized there was something missing. "Seth's editing plans were all in his head," said Carreras, "and the footage didn't make any sense. Maybe he wasn't thinking clearly. There were master shots of a scene, coverage of the actors within the scene—but no entrances and exits."

Carreras, Brandy, Skeggs and new editor Peter Weatherly cobbled together certain sequences with material on hand. There were no replacements available at the price Hammer

could afford, so Carreras decided to finish the film himself in what he hoped was Holt's style, taking no screen credit.

"I thought producing was supposed to be an easy job," recalled Brandy. "This just dragged on forever, and of course, I'd made a deal with Jimmy Carreras for very little money. I asked for a little more, since we'd gone longer than anyone expected. He wasn't about to part with one dime more."

Released in the U. S. by AIP and in England by EMI, BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB was a Hammer anomaly—a fantasy set in contemporary times—and covers different ground than its three predecessors. More a mystical thriller than a bandage-and-bone potboiler, it has surprisingly solid performances, looks great, and has unsettling feeling to it—partially, perhaps, because of the production problems. Under the circumstances, it's a surprise that it makes any sense at all. The story was remade as THE AWAKENING in 1980, for far more money but to no greater effect. □

continued from page 28

with two blades raised and this huge snarl on his face and his eyes wide open with this big tall hat and all this stuff flowing off him. He jumped right off the page. Stephen Sommers said, 'That's the guy!' and I hung that picture on my wall here at ILM to remind me this is what these guys had to be like. They're going to be really, really scary. These guys are mean!"

Dudman instructed Pollard to produce a battery of half-scale head and shoulder clay maquettes depicting the Priest and Soldier Mummy concepts, imparting each character with a unique and separate personality. "We had about 20 Priest and Soldier Mummies, and they all had to hold your interest, even if they might just get one big quick close-up," said Dudman. "I wanted to feel that there was a history behind each one. Gary came up with the lot. He did splendid stuff. He's a very good characterizer."

Look closely and you might catch a small homage to the creator of the original latex and bandage Karloff Mummy amongst the group. "One of our mummies is very much a Jack Pierce celebration," Dudman pointed out. "We wanted to make sure we didn't inadvertently copy what somebody else had done, which, with that many previous versions out there, could easily happen quite accidentally. We also wanted to get a flavor of what this movie was about. This was a Universal Picture, very much in the trend of the old '30s movie. We all grew up on these things and it's important to take them seriously, to take what you can from them and pass a little bit on. I'd like to hope Jack Pierce would spot a few things in our movie if he were alive."

May through August, 1998, filming of *THE MUMMY* filled six sound stages at Shepperton Studios, in the heart of the English countryside. Shooting was laborious, requiring Vosloo in and out of makeup in his partially regenerated subterranean guise. "We had to shoot a live-action reference plate of Arnold for every visual effects shot," stated effects producer Bell. "Several passes for ILM and then one to give the editor,

## FILLING KARLOFF'S BANDAGES

**"I hope we can rekindle interest in the old films," said Arnold Vosloo. "It would be really cool if some of the young audience went out and rented the original."**



The mummification process is performed on the still living Imhotep—as punishment for his blasphemous attempt to raise the princess from the dead.

Bob Ducsay, some way to pace and time the action. This also gave John Burton's animators a way to reference the nuances of the shot, to make sure the CG character always had the same mannerisms as Arnold."

Not putting too fine a point on it, Stephen Sommers declared, "Shooting special effects is a huge pain in the ass! ILM were fantastic, and my crew up in San Raphael were great. I'd just want to work with them again and again, but, boy, it's a big pain in the butt. It's like making two movies. It takes twice as much time and effort as any other movie. My normal shooting day lasted 14 to 16 hours, but that's just to make the movie. After that I'd have to spend at least another three or four hours every day dealing with all those practicalities. And this one was more complex than *DEEP RISING*—more shots, bigger shots. Unbelievable."

Although Vosloo found the process—and his director's boundless exuberance—exhausting, the opportunity of bringing a character to life in the digital realm was a unique and rewarding experience. "It

was fantastic. It's you, but it's not you, but it is you," Vosloo mused. "It really was a head game. There came a point where I was there, with all these little red LEDs stuck all over me, and I started to think I might as well not be there; I was going through the motions. Then I saw the playback on the computer monitor, showing what they're going to be doing to me. I freaked out. I realized I had to go for it with every take because they were using everything. I asked them if they wanted me to ham it up and play it broad. They said no, be as subtle as you want. It was amazing. If this works, these guys will win the Academy Award."

Vosloo compared the technique to Gary Sinise's scenes in *FORREST GUMP* when ILM removed the actor's legs, "Now imagine Gary with his stomach blown away and you can see the back of his spine, his heart throbbing, even completely through him, and all of that completely three-dimensional. I can see why a lot of people would be turned off by it, but I really think it's the future. It's totally taking performance to

another level."

In addition to the on-set effects, Vosloo also appeared at Shepperton in his original splendor as High Priest, enraptured by his Princess, Anksu-Namun. "I worked so hard in making the Mummy human. I wanted to make sure it's very understandable this guy just loves this woman—when you see her naked, painted in gold, you will understand too—but I didn't even think about this guy's special powers, the fact that he was a holy man. I just played a guy who was fairly powerful and had some kind of voodoo, but he was really a man in love, who prostrated himself in front of this woman. That was all I went for. All the other stuff will be there, but on my side of things, that's all I went for."

One concern for Vosloo, both as an admirer of the genre and as a relative newcomer at the center of a big-time Hollywood blockbuster, was that comparisons would be made between his and Karloff's legendary performance. "Every day I was thinking, 'I'm gonna get crucified. I should never have done this job,' Vosloo reflected. "Hopefully the fear factor ramped it up a notch. I know the studio's going to make sure it's not just the genre fans who will come to see this film, but the hope is they will accept us too. As Jim Jacks is fond of saying—'It's not your grandfather's Mummy.'"

Sommers and Vosloo discussed the Karloff influence, to the extent that Vosloo offered to duplicate mannerisms and demeanor. "Karloff was so underrated in the first one," commented Vosloo, "so still and quiet; it was very nice." Sommers' response was quick but reassuring. "Stephen said no. He told me to make it my own; he told me that was why he cast me, because what I had been doing was interesting, and it was right for what we were doing." Vosloo revealed their creative solution, partly a product of his research. "The priests in ancient Egypt were handed down from father to son, and from a very young age raised and taught by their fathers and the other priests how to behave, until they finally stepped into



Industrial Light and Magic's computer-generated imagery helps separate the new version of *THE MUMMY* from its predecessors, inflicting a swam of locusts (above), plague of boils (left) and showing a face dissolving into sand (below).



the role or even ascended to High Priest, which is what Imhotep was. In the back of my head I said to myself, 'Imagine that Boris was your Dad, that's the kind of genes you're carrying and that's the way you carry yourself.'"

As the main unit wrapped up its work on *THE MUMMY*, a final week of shooting followed that supplied ILM with a crucial element to bring to life their visual effects. "We spent our last week in London shooting a motion-capture session with Arnold, duplicating all the shots that would contain the CG Imhotep, capturing Arnold's motion on a green-screen recreation of the set," Bell explained. "All that information for each of those shots could then be translated into the computer and applied to our CG Imhotep, so—as Stephen put it—Arnold's mother would know it was him."

**F**ive months later, in his cutting room at Universal City, Sommers sat down with his editorial team and composer Jerry Goldsmith for a music spotting session, viewing the latest cut of the film he had pitched two years previously. The assembly was full of title cards representing missing visual effects, but as the shots were trickling in, the finished film was beginning to emerge.

"It's a really fun movie!" Sommers exclaimed. "Sometimes at this point in editing you get tired of watching and re-watching your own film, but I've not got tired yet because this movie seems to keep getting better with all of the effects. They've blended really well. I think by now I've learned to integrate the effects into a story and its characters so you're not just showing the effects: something's really hap-

pening; a character is involved or growing from it. As a special effect comes to life, suddenly a story point becomes clear, or a character trait pops, suddenly something that you were hoping would be funny makes you laugh, and that's been really great."

ILM supervisor Burton was equally proud of their achievement. "I think we've created a remarkable creature," he said. "Our Mummy really looks like something you've never seen before, moves like something you've never seen before, and really creates an incredibly strong screen presence. I think cinema is always at its best when it can present something to the audience that they can't get anywhere else; and personally I see that as a Yin/Yang thing—for every feel-good movie of the summer, there should be a hide-under-the-seats movie of the summer. I

think that's what we've made."

The final word went to the Mummy himself, Arnold Vosloo, whose mellifluous voice intones the movie's opening narration. "I have this pet theory that the reason we're attracted to any of these horror icons—Dracula, Frankenstein, the Wolfman, the Mummy—is because ultimately they all beat death in their own weird way. They may get killed in the finale, but invariably they rise again in the sequel and the next one. They are immortal. I think that's why we take pleasure in them. If you asked me what I hope for with this movie, I hope you'll pay your seven bucks, it surprises you, and you have fun. But I hope we can rekindle interest in the old films. It would be really cool if some of the young audience who saw our film went out and rented the original. That would really make me happy." □

# NOAH'S ARK

**NBC mini-series rewrites the Bible as a big-budget special effects extravaganza.**

*By Anthony P. Montesano*

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah before the Great Flood? Lot, nephew of Abraham, a contemporary of Noah? Noah meeting God by a raging volcano? What's going on?

"God must be wrong," reasoned Steven Paul (producer of *BABY GENIUSES*), president of Crystal Sky International, which is contributing effects to NBC's four-hour miniseries *NOAH'S ARK*. "[Writer] Peter Barnes has corrected the Bible."

There are simpler answers for why the miniseries, produced to air during the May sweeps, has rearranged the events of the Bible. The Noah legend is a fairly short story in *Genesis* which has very little plot development and basically two set pieces: the arrival of the animals two-by-two and the onslaught of the flood—certainly not enough to fill four hours. Also, adding the stories of Sodom and Lot provides more special effect sequences of the kind that turn the tale into what old-time publicists would call a

"4-See Movie," as in: *SEE...divine fireballs rain down from the sky to destroy the evil cities! SEE...Lot's wife turn into a pillar of salt as her curiosity gets the best of her! SEE...God spew lava from a volcano at Noah to prove he means business! SEE...Noah battle pirates and sea monsters!*

Volcano? Wait a minute—isn't that *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS*? Pirates? Sea monsters? Huh? So what if it doesn't happen that way in the Bible. This is the scripture according to Robert Halmi Sr.,

Typically, the wickedness that brings down God's wrath takes the form of lascivious sexuality.



Building the Ark for NBC's mini-series.

whose production company, Hallmark Entertainment, has scored a string of mini-series successes with *MERLIN*, *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*, *THE ODYSSEY*, and most recently *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*.

The Noah legend has been the most enduring and universal story in the history of mankind; its iconography is among the most widely spread today. In film, the story has been seen in John Huston's ambitious 1966 film *THE BIBLE: IN THE BEGINNING*, in which Huston himself played Noah and God; the 1959 Oscar-nominated, Walt Disney animated short *NOAH'S ARK*; and the 1977 documentary *IN SEARCH OF NOAH'S ARK*, directed by James L. Conway, who went on to direct a number of genre efforts including *THE BOOGENS* (1981) and a number of *STAR TREK* episodes.

This latest version—which features over 250 special effect shots—boasts a trio of Oscar-winning actors as its leads: Jon Voight as Noah, Mary Steenburgen as his wife, Naamah, and F. Murray Abraham as Lot. Popping up in smaller roles are Carol Kane (*TAXI*) as Lot's wife and James Coburn as a philosophical peddler Noah runs into from time to time. Taking on directorial tasks was John Irvin (*GHOST STORY*) working from a script by Barnes, best





A full-scale section was used, abetted with a 1/20 scale miniature.

**“God must be wrong,” said effects supplier Steven Paul of the restructuring of events by the screenwriter. “Peter Barnes has corrected the Bible.”**

green screen techniques to achieve our desired effect. In two cases, however, involving a Dodo bird and a saber-toothed tiger, we had to rely on CG effects. The Dodo bird is full CG. The tiger is a modified version of a lion. Close-ups of the lion’s head were combined with computer-generated fangs. Many of these scenes turned out to be extremely complex requiring anywhere from 20 to 40 layers on compositing in post-production. Of course a film like *BABE* had as many as 130 passes to achieve the effects of talking animals. We simply couldn’t afford to do that.”

For a sequence involving a typhoon and a tidal wave, computer generated water was employed. “Water is probably the most difficult of the elements to get right using CG,” admits Stroweis. “Integrating the movement of the water with the boat was extremely difficult.”

Noah’s meeting with God by a volcano—a meeting that does not take place in the Bible—also presented its share of chal-

lenges. Due to the limited location shooting dictated by a tight budget, matte paintings were used to change the environment behind the mountain doubling for the volcano so as not to appear the same as another mountain seen later in the movie.

In the Bible, the size of the ark is 300 cubits long by 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high. A cubit is roughly 17 to 20 inches; the Ark, therefore, could have measured from 437 feet to 512 feet in length. For the mini-series, a scaled down 1/20th scale model was built. The bow of the ship was constructed full scale in water tank in Melbourne, Australia, used during Halmi’s production of *MOBY DICK*. A number of shots required the editing of the model, real water, and CGI. The team agrees that they were in many cases shooting for effects that would appear seamless on screen.

“On screen, many of our effects should be invisible and simply enhance the production,” concluded Paul. “They shouldn’t look like effects.” □

known for his satirical film *THE RULING CLASS*.

The revisionist mini-series begins with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, as Lot, Noah, his wife and sons are among the few to escape. An outcast in his new village, Noah is called by God to a mountain where the divine spirit reveals himself through signs and warns him of the impending flood. Noah becomes ridiculed by fellow townspeople as he begins to build the ark on God’s command at the height of a long drought. Soon, animals from around the world begin to gather at the ark and play an active role in protecting the vessel, which is attacked by villagers while on dry ground, and by pirates and monsters at sea.

The special effects team was supervised by Oscar-nominee Jacques Stroweis (*TRUE LIES*). For Stroweis, the challenge was in attempting to achieve film quality effects on a TV budget: “We were shooting for a state-of-the art action movie feel,” said Stroweis. “When the fireballs rain down from the sky, they’re coming from God, so we had the freedom to stylize and ‘heighten the reality’ of these effects with computer graphics in a way that is different from, say, *DANTE’S PEAK* or *VOLCANO*, in which the fire had to approximate a more realistic tone.”

“This is *TITANIC* meets *TWISTER* with a bit of *ARMAGEDDON* thrown in,” joked special effects producer Terri Moore.

Given the mix of events that have been added into this new version of the story, a host of special effects approaches needed to be incorporated, according to Stroweis. “For example with regard to the arrival of the animals at the Ark, we wanted to stay as realistic as possible. We use live animals and incorporate motion control, split screen and

A crane shot films a repentant crowd who begin to realize Noah was right, as the rain starts to flood down on them.



## Unbelievable—a cyberspace movie that's actually good!

### THE MATRIX

Warner Bros. presents, in association with Village Roadshow Pictures and Grouch II Film Partnership, a Silver Pictures Production. Produced by Joel Silver. Written and directed by the Wachowski Brothers. Cinematography (color, widescreen): Bill Pope. Music: Don Davis. Editing: Zach Staenberg. Production design: Owen Paterson. Visual fx producer, Matthew Ferro. Bullet-time photography by Manex; visual fx director, John Gaeta. Costume design: Kym Barrett. Fight coordinator, Yuen Wo Ping. Executive producers: Barrie Osborne, Andrew Mason, Andy Wachowski, Larry Wachowski, Erwin Stoff, and Bruce Berman; co-producer, Dan Cracchiolo. 3/99, 135 mins. Rated R.

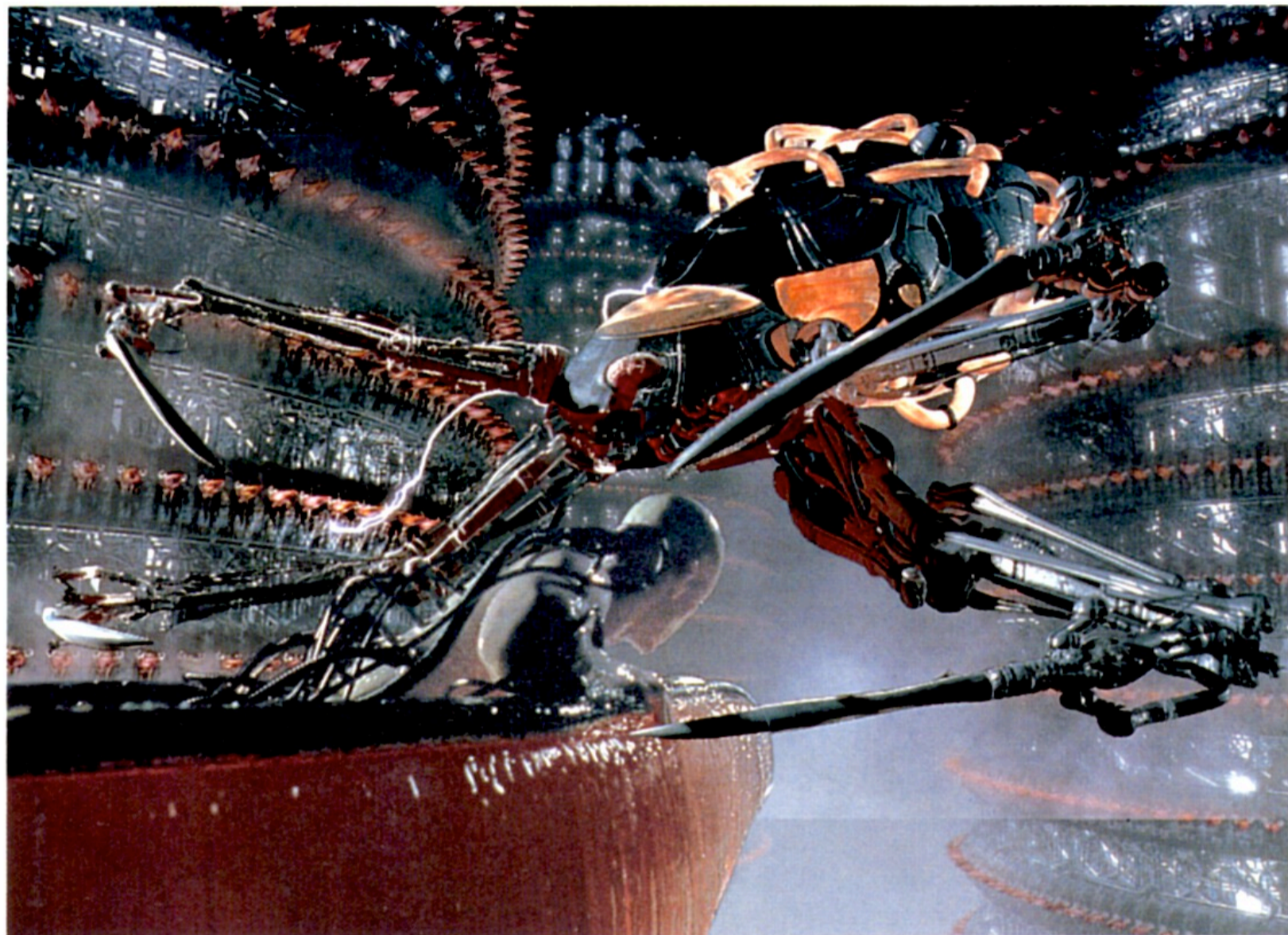
Neo.....Keanu Reeves  
Morpheus.....Laurence Fishburne  
Trinity.....Carrie-Anne Moss  
Agent Smith.....Hugo Weaving  
Cypher.....Joe Pantoliano  
Switch.....Belinda McClory  
Apoc.....Julian Arahange

by Steve Biodrowski

Excellence can be easier to acknowledge than it is to explain, which is why writing favorable reviews can be more difficult than writing negative ones: a list of virtues is a harder to identify than a laundry list of faults. In the case of *THE MATRIX*, the film is filled with what sounds like a laundry list of typically brainless big-budget Hollywood excesses: a cyberpunk, virtual reality storyline; an ear-shattering soundtrack; numerous fight and chase scenes; and enough gunfire to turn a building into the concrete equivalent of swiss cheese.

Yet, somehow, these elements coalesce into a film that is much more than just another Joe Silver science-fiction free-for-all (a la *DEMOLITION MAN*). The Wachowski Brothers have actually written and directed a densely plotted, intriguing tale that reuses familiar material without ever surrendering to hackneyed clichés.

In a nutshell, Neo (Reeves) discovers that his life in 1999 is an illusion; he's really just an organic battery supplying energy to a 22nd-century world run by machines that keep humanity blissfully unaware of their true existence via the Matrix, a cyberspace recreation of 1999. With the help of Morpheus (Fishburne), Neo's mind escapes from its link-up to the Matrix, and Neo learns the mental skills necessary to go back in and defeat the Agents (artificial intelligence characters) who patrol humanity. Also, Neo learns that he may be "The One," a character prophesied by an oracle, who will be able to see through the illusion of the Matrix and thus completely overcome its programming for



Neo (Keanu Reeves) awakens from the Matrix into a frightening reality: he's an organic battery used by sentient machines.

physical laws (like gravity) that actually don't exist in cyberspace.

There's a lot of story to tell, and it is told in a thrilling way, often on the run, seldom slowing down, but never leaving us behind. The action never distances us from the characters, never spills over into sloppy excess. It's a mark of the careful construction that, over an hour into the running time, as Neo is heading to rescue Morpheus from the Agents, there is a palpable sense of anticipation for the big shoot out we know is coming. The reason is obvious: we've seen lots of martial arts, special effects, and action by this time, but gunfire has been kept to a relative minimum, the Wachowskis having saved up this big set piece for an appropriate dramatic moment (this is the first time that Neo, who has spent most of the film learning and being led, must make a decision and take action without the guidance of Morpheus).

Technical credits are superb. Especially exciting is the martial arts choreography; the over-the-top action will be familiar to fans of Hong Kong film, but in this case the unreality is justified, because it takes place in an unreal

world. The special effects are also noteworthy for enhancing the impact of the action, reminding us of the cyberspace setting with impossible 3-D camera moves amidst ultra-slow-motion as characters seem suspended in mid-air during flying kung fu leaps. Amazingly, this approach never succumbs to the obvious pitfall: the dangers seems more profound, not less, even though we know they are not "real" in the physical sense.

The cast is uniformly excellent. Reeves erases any bad memories of *JOHNNY MNEMONIC*, even playing off his Bill-and-Ted image to humorous effect. Fishburne is a model voice of wisdom, and Carrie Anne Moss makes for an exciting femme fatale. Special kudos go to Hugo Weaving for somehow managing to make Agent Smith both mechanical and malevolent (almost as if Jack Webb had been possessed by the devil).

If there is any failure on the part of the Wachowskis, it is that they use the intriguing world they've invented only as a pretext for plot, without really disturbing us on the level of ideas (unlike *DARK CITY* last year). The film is filled with concepts that are

scarcely explored (such as the homebase of the human resistance movement, which is mentioned but not shown). Fortunately, *THE MATRIX* does not fall prey to the standard plot structure of futuristic freedom fighter movies, wherein the hero conveniently joins the rebels just when the big battle is about to be fought that will overthrow the totalitarian regime and restore peace to the world. Instead, *THE MATRIX* builds up to the point where Neo finally proves that he is The One, capable of fighting the Matrix and its agents. That battle itself will, presumably, be the subject of future films, in which the intriguing concepts introduced here may be more fully developed. In the meantime, we have the most exciting, intelligent, and imaginative genre film so far this year. Filled with images that amaze without overwhelming the story, *THE MATRIX* tackles the growing computer/cyberspace/VR sub-genre of films that includes duds and disappointments like *HACKERS*, *THE NET*, *VIRTUALITY*, and *WILD PALMS*. Just when you thought you never wanted to see another, along comes one that's absolutely astounding. □

## BORDERLAND

By Anthony P. Montesano

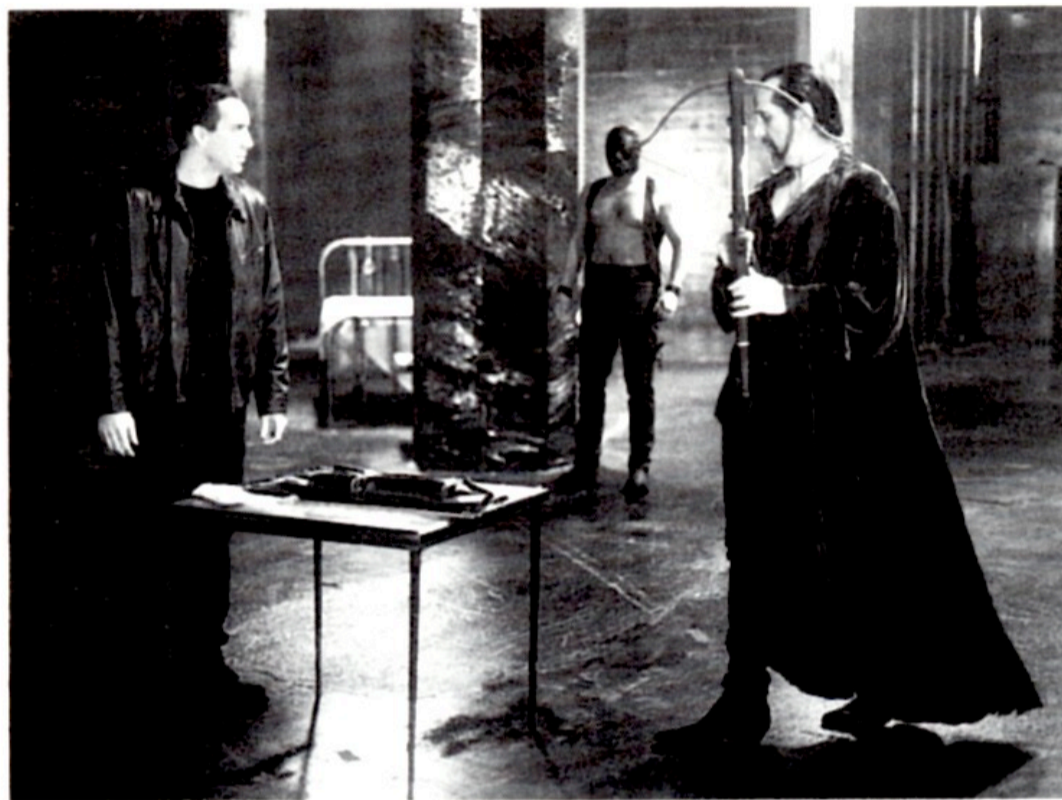
## THE FACE OF EVIL IN 8MM

*Walker's follow up to SEVEN is just not up to snuff.*

Screenwriter Andrew Kevin Walker has made a career of putting a normal face on the specter of evil. When we see it, we are supposed to recognize our neighbors, ourselves, even Norm from Cheers. Walker does not subscribe to the post-Freudian suppositions of Alfred Hitchcock's *PSYCHO*. His "monsters" are not Norman Bates-type creatures. They haven't been beaten as children. They haven't been raped. Society has not done them any disservice. They kill and mutilate simply because they want to. Walker's oeuvre to date is awash in this notion. He intends for it to have the same disorienting shock as a random drive-by shooting. No explanations. It just happens.

Even, the Freddie Krueger-like monster of Edward Furlong's id in Walker's first film *BRAINSCAN* was originally envisioned in Walker's script as a "disembodied voice on the phone." So, in effect, when the character speaks to the evil, he finds that he's speaking to himself. The pronouncement that evil results independent of societal circumstance is a deep-seeded notion in many cultures and is the driving theme behind Walker's latest effort, the Joel Schumacher-directed *8MM* (Columbia, 2/99, R, 123 mins).

Here, Walker recreates the long-standing urban myth of snuff films (in which people are supposedly killed on screen) with the explanation that these films are what pornographers make (for enough money) as a side hobby. But as shocking and outrageous as *8MM* attempts to be (there are large knives, a crucifix and an executioner named Machine who wears a leather S&M mask), it still pales in comparison to Walker's masterpiece *SEVEN*, a film that, while saddled with some of the same stiff "movie" plot conventions as *8MM*, bursts onto the screen with an adrenaline-inducing cinematic power that doesn't ease up long past the last frame. With such similar material coming from the same screenwriter, *8MM* couldn't help but seem derivative (much like Francis Ford Coppola's third go-around at *THE GODFATHER* franchise). Walker has gone to the same well once too often. The words and the props are



L to r: private eye Tom Welles (Nicolas Cage) confronts the masked Machine (Chris Bauer) and snuff filmmaker Dino Velvet (Peter Stormare) in *8MM*.

all there but their roles seem haggard. Once we've gone into the dessert with Kevin Spacey, Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman, we've "been there and done that."

*8MM* is not without its powerful moments nor its admirable performances (most notably Joaquin Phoenix as Max California, a street-wise Virgil to Nicholas Cage's Dante in the pornographic underworld of Los Angeles and New York). The real shock of *8MM* (and *SEVEN* for that matter) is that both films were embraced by major studios that were willing to market them not as *FRIDAY THE 13TH* exploitation, but rather as mainstream thrillers. Neither film is that. In fact, the filmmakers here are hoping that the audience for *8MM* will gain the same visceral thrill from watching a film about snuff films as the (hypothetical) people who watch the snuff films themselves. If that's not exploitation, I don't know what is.

**BLAST FROM THE PAST** (New Line Cinema, 2/99, PG-13, 106 mins) recalls the live-action Disney films of the late 50s and early 60s in which wacky inventors involve their family and friends in a kooky experiment. Here, Calvin (played by Christopher Walken, who has mapped out the last 20 years playing characters slightly left of center) is the brilliant inventor who has secretly constructed an elaborate bomb

shelter to protect his family in the event that the Cold War heats up. Sissy Spacek plays Helen, his Eisenhower-era, pregnant wife who descends into the shelter with him when the announcement of the Cuban Missile Crisis frightens Calvin into believing that a plane gone astray above his town is actually a Russian bomb. The irony of course is since this plane eventually lands on Calvin's house, destroying it, going into the bomb shelter actually does save his family's lives. His son Adam is born into this subterranean prefabricated suburb. The 35-year lock on the door prevents the family from leaving until the 1990s. The film deftly illustrates the changes going on above ground as the unaffected "nuclear family" below is frozen in time, raising its son as if it was still 1962.

The film is rife with sublime irony that isn't lost on its audience. Brendan Fraser plays the adult Adam as a child-man (a role he has perfected here) whose perfect manners and moral upbringing makes him at first appear as a freak when he emerges above ground. His only source of guidance for first 35 years of his life has been his parents and his constant references to their good advice makes those he contacts wonder how he could be so well adjusted. Alicia Silverstone plays Eve, a bitchy product of the disillusioned 90s who befriends Adam

and reluctantly (and unknowingly) helps him gather supplies for his family down below.

The premise holds tremendous promise, and the film does not disappoint as points are made about the value of lessons learned from the past. In fact, everything about this wonderfully surprising film works: Hugh Wilson's restrained direction never bulldozes the subtext of the film with gratuitous slapstick and the performances of Fraser, Silverstone, and Oscar winners Walken and Spacek are all on target.

This film brought to mind another underrated *Borderland* effort, Joe Dante's Cuban Missile Crisis opus, *MATINEE*. Both films offer a similar ode to the loss of innocence, to a time before Simon and Garfunkel sadly asked "where have you gone Joe DiMaggio, a nation turns its lonely eyes to you." I'd recommend watching them back-to-back with your family and a big bag of popcorn.

The pre-release press info for **DEEP END OF THE OCEAN** (Columbia, 3/99, PG-13, 148 mins) teased with hints that the film's kidnapping plot hinged on a "miraculous" event, but that come-on turned out to be an exaggeration, as the missing boy's return is merely a wildly improbable coincidence. The film itself is not bad, but it falls well outside the *Borderland*. □

Emerging after 35 years in a fallout shelter, Adam (Brendan Fraser) meets Eve (Alicia Silverstone) in *BLAST FROM THE PAST*.



## LASERBLAST

By Dennis Fischer

## STANLEY KUBRICK ON DISC: Classics from cinema's greatest science fiction filmmaker.

Stanley Kubrick was one of the great directors and certainly the greatest science fiction director, with three masterpieces to his credit. He received the kind of treatment and contracts most other directors only dream of (including control of production, final cut, and advertising).

Kubrick was a perfectionist, and his careful attention to his art is evident in every frame of his work. I once talked with actor Joe Turkel (*THE SHINING*) about Kubrick's penchant for numerous takes. Turkel recalled an actor almost reduced to tears and asking Kubrick what he wanted when asked to do a shot for the fortieth time. Kubrick calmly responded, "I've spent four years of my life preparing this project. What I want is I want it fucking perfect."

Precise and uncompromising, possessed of an undeniable talent, Kubrick's films leave lasting impressions on all who truly see them. His early anti-war film *PATHS OF GLORY* (Criterion) has received homages from Robert Zemeckis ("Yellow" from *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*) and Terry Gilliam (WWI scenes in *12 MONKEYS*). *THE SIMPSONS* has borrowed from Kubrick's oeuvre numerous times, especially from *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY*. Kubrick's work has become a part of the shared cultural fabric, which makes it fascinating to note that

**DR. STRANGELOVE, with Peter Sellers in the title role, has been issued on laserdisc three times.**



Jack Torrance (Jack Nicholson) interviews for a job in *THE SHINING*, Stanley Kubrick's 1980 horror film based on the best-selling novel by Stephen King.

except for *DR. STRANGELOVE, OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB*, all of Kubrick's subsequent genre work was initially met with disdain that slowly turned into acclaim as each work's enduring qualities became recognized.

*DR. STRANGELOVE* has been issued on laserdisc three times (RCA/Columbia, Criterion, Columbia/Tri-Star). The old RCA pressing suffered from a grainy image and inferior monaural sound. Kubrick himself supervised the sharper Criterion transfer which alternates the aspect ratio between 1.33 and 1.66. The Criterion edition is in CAV and presents a number of bonuses, including an early draft of the script (prior to Terry Southern's involvement), which is devoid of the movie's notable black humor and has a framing story about aliens finding a manuscript on a burned out planet.

Additionally, Criterion has included Civil Defense films and brochures from the time period, all of which notably misled the public, as well as a music video ("My Teenage Fallout Queen") and a trailer that presents a few quick, behind-the-scenes shots of Kubrick at work. The gatefold jacket presents an essay detailing the numerous sexual allusions scattered throughout the film, which looks at the big bang both in terms of sex and mass deaths, neatly juxtaposing the subcon-

scious's two biggest drives. The Columbia/Tri-Star edition of the film offers a comparable transfer in CLV without the additional bonus materials.

Kubrick only made two widescreen films, *SPARTACUS* (MCA/Universal and Criterion), which has been restored to include some of Kubrick's ground-breaking splatter work (Kubrick hired, for example, armless men to wear prosthetic limbs that would be hacked off in the battle scenes), and *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY*. After noting that films had a greater longevity on television (and later video), he abandoned the format to make all his subsequent films in 1.66. Seeing the first laser release of *2001*, with the film's titles given new, crooked lettering, it is easy to understand why Kubrick would be dissatisfied with the format.

*2001* is the most awe-inspiring science fiction film of all time, and it deserves to be seen in a theater, especially given the massive amount of detail that Kubrick crammed into his frame. It left many initial viewers baffled because Kubrick chose to tell the story entirely cinematically, with no overt verbal explanations for what is transpiring. It also helped to be familiar with the evolutionary concepts of Olaf Stapledon as well as co-scripter Arthur C. Clarke's story "The Sentinel," which served as an inspiration for the film (about

the unearthing of an alien artifact on the moon that transmits a signal when unearthed, revealing that mankind has its cradle to explore its satellite).

My favorite video transfer of the film remains the Criterion, which was transferred from a 35mm intermediate negative to a video digital format master tape under the supervision of Kubrick. The disc's letterboxing measures 2.1, and the CAV version contains excerpts from various publications detailing the construction and meaning of the film, various memos from the filmmakers and their scientific advisors, transcripts of interviews with scientists who speculated on alien life and future technology, and well-chosen excerpts from Clarke's books. What is not included is the fabled extensive footage that Kubrick trimmed from the film after its initial week of release. (Kubrick also altered *STRANGELOVE* after release so that Slim Pickens' line that read "pretty good weekend in Dallas" was changed to "Vegas" following Kennedy's assassination, and he trimmed an epilogue from *THE SHINING* after its first week.)

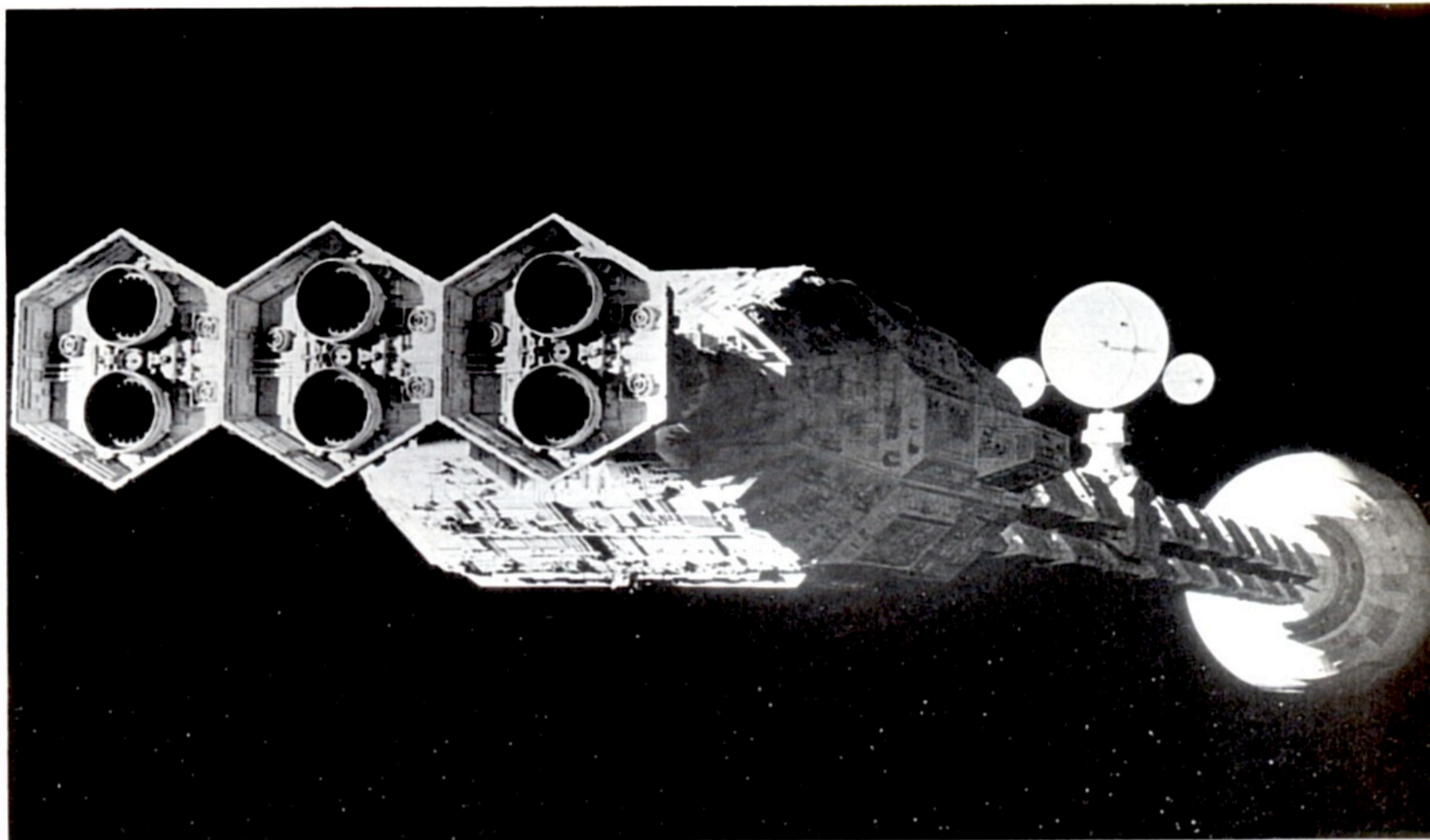
MGM/UA has both a CLV and subsequent CAV transfer of *2001*, which has whiter whites and redder reds. Unfortunately, this makes the "Dawn of Man" sequence look as if it were shot on Mars. MGM/UA's discs are transferred from a 65mm print that gives a bit more picture information, measuring 2.25, and the CAV disc includes an essay by Clarke, some 80 production stills including a few from deleted sequences, a trailer, and a 30 minute promotional film created prior to the film's release with Clarke explaining that science fiction films prepare the public for future technologies.

There is no question that many felt transformed by Kubrick's look into the future, which confounded traditional movie-going expectations: there is minimal dialogue and characterization; the plot is largely cerebral; the most poignant and disturbing death is that of a computer, and in the end, mankind achieves a dazzling transcendence that pushes him beyond the realm of our understanding, transforming the film into a unique, quasi-religious experience.

**A CLOCKWORK ORANGE** (Warner Bros.) is perhaps Kubrick's most controversial film, and after complaints, Kubrick withdrew it from circulation in the U.K. (The film was never banned there as it has sometimes been erroneously assumed.) For an almost 30 year-old movie, it manages to remain convincingly futuristic, thanks to Kubrick's approach to depicting urban squalor, basic amenities, and varying fashion styles. Many are repelled by the film's violence and fail to see the dark wit evident throughout.

Based on Anthony Burgess' novel, the narrative explores of concept of free will by examining it in the context of an amoral thug named Alex (a brilliant Malcolm McDowell) who rapes and pillages until he is sentenced for murder and volunteers to undergo an experimental technique to cure him of his violent tendencies (thereby depriving him of free will). The most charming villain since Richard III, Alex continually invites the audience to admire or sympathize with him, making the audience co-conspirators in his vicious crimes. (The title refers to something natural transformed into something unnatural.)

Aesthetically, **CLOCKWORK** is Kubrick's ugliest film, with bad taste in clothing and design evident everywhere; but of course, that is part of the point: that an Alex would spring from such a dispiriting environment. Kubrick shows himself a master manipulator with a complete mastery of cinematic techniques all calculatingly employed to achieve his effects and mock authority of every stripe. The initial transfer of the film was slightly blurry, with off-colored



The spaceship Discovery heads for Jupiter in the greatest science-fiction film of all time, 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY (1968).

flesh tones, so Kubrick personally supervised the letterboxed transfer, which, apart from the opening and closing credits, is otherwise presented full frame with the colors properly corrected and a clearer monaural soundtrack.

Given Kubrick's reputation as being cold and unsparing of his audiences, many assumed that his adaptation of Stephen King's **THE SHINING** (Warner Bros) would lead to his creating the ultimate horror film. But Kubrick confounded expectations once again. He instead created a cerebral horror loosely based on King's tale of an American family falling apart from isolation and a father's guilt over harming his son while intoxi-

cated. Now that King himself and director Mick Garris have created a more faithful adaptation, it is even easier to see the virtues of Kubrick's more creative approach (the King-Garris version has some tremendously well-executed sequences, but cannot sustain them, is overly long, and features a burn-down-the-hotel ending straight out of Roger Corman).

Kubrick has always been drawn to large spaces in his films (the War Room in **STRANGELOVE**; the spaceship Discovery in 2001; the ballrooms in **BARRY LYNDON**; the barracks in **FULL METAL JACKET**), and **THE SHINING** is no exception, as the Overlook Hotel becomes a major character in the drama. Rather than the genre cliché of setting the story in a dark, claustrophobic space, Kubrick creates his horror in a bright, open environment filled with corridors and doors behind which lurk unexpected horrors (who can forget such images as the ax-murdered twins or the elevator of blood), the worst of which turns out to be a once loving father transformed into a psychotic maniac who wields an axe and spouts TV catchphrases. ("Herrrrre's Johnny!")

From the very beginning, Kubrick is able to create a disturbing atmosphere by constantly cluing the viewers that, at the Overlook, things are not quite normal, and many of the film's atmospheric effects are as subtle as Jack Nicholson's over-the-top perfor-

mance is broad, creating a film that is simultaneously frightening and funny. While Warners' full frame transfer features a forceful monaural soundtrack, the image is sometimes grainy and lackluster.

Madness is one of Kubrick's most important recurring themes. We see it in the way generals regard their men as cannon fodder to advance their careers in **PATHS OF GLORY**; in the insanity of mutually assured destruction in **DR. STRANGELOVE**; in a computer whose programmed enthusiasm for the mission causes him to kill the astronauts who might dismantle him after he has made a mistake in 2001; in a writer driven to destroy the young man who raped his wife in **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE**; in Jack Torrance's inability to cope with his wife's lingering distrust and his own writer's block in **THE SHINING**; and in how a misfit soldier is driven to murder his drill instructor, how young men are trained into dehumanized killing machines, and how these highly trained, misogynistic men are bested by a woman in **FULL METAL JACKET**. (Although not a genre film, this is one of Kubrick's most horrific movies, filled with the violence of war, young men whose only thoughts are bumper sticker statements and an appetite for destruction, and the slow draining away of humanity and individuality.)

Every one of Kubrick's films

continued on page 61

Aesthetically, **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE** (1972) is Kubrick's ugliest film, portraying a dispiriting, futuristic environment that leads to outbursts of "ultra-violence."



## Love! Adventure! And Urban Destruction! Actress Evelyne Kraft on appearing in MIGHTY PEKING MAN

By Steve Ryfle

Sometime during World War II, the bones of the prehistoric Peking Man, an anthropological specimen discovered in China, mysteriously disappeared and were believed lost forever. But, thanks to Quentin Tarantino's Rolling Thunder Pictures, the creature (actually, its cinematic sibling) has been rediscovered in the form of the 1977 Shaw Brothers KING KONG knockoff, MIGHTY PEKING MAN.

First released in Hong Kong in 1977, and briefly distributed to the U.S. in 1979 in a truncated version called GOLIATHON, the picture was re-released by Rolling Thunder and Cowboy Booking International (in its original, uncut form) for midnight screenings in 20 U.S. cities in April. Made by the studio that unleashed the first international wave of kung-fu films in the early 1970s with FIVE FINGERS OF DEATH, MIGHTY PEKING MAN was supposed to capitalize on the publicity surrounding director John Guillermin's \$30 million KONG remake (1976), which was released in Hong Kong just a month before. But it cost only 6-million HK dollars to make



Samantha calls to Mighty Peking Man, locked in a cage between carnival gigs.

(about \$500,000), a fraction of KONG's budget, and it wore its technical inferiority on its hairy sleeve. According to Rolling Thunder's publicity materials, the movie grossed just \$2 million HK during its week-long initial release and, after limited international distribution, faded into obscurity. Until now, that is.

Directed by Ho Meng-hua, whose prior credits included THE FLYING GUILLOTINE (1976), MIGHTY PEKING MAN fuses the King Kong mythos with the Shaw Brothers' knack for kinetic over-exaggeration. From beginning to end, the film is loaded with action sequences, violence, and mass destruction that, while not executed exactly seamlessly, is entertaining in its relentlessness. As they had previously done with

their ULTRAMAN clone, INFRA-MAN, the Shaw Brothers ape (pun intended) the Japanese formula of special effects: a man in a monster costume, miniature buildings, lots of explosions, matte shots. Most of the effects for MIGHTY PEKING MAN were, in fact, filmed by a freelance crew of Japanese special-effects veterans from Toho Studios, led by Teisho Arikawa (special effects director on SON OF GODZILLA and DESTROY ALL MONSTERS) and including a young Koichi Kawakita (special effects director on all the 1990s Godzilla movies).

But, more than the abundant (and often absurd) effects, more than the looped-and-loopy dialogue, what makes MIGHTY PEKING MAN more than just routine monkey business is Samantha, the big ape's ingenue, played by a then-20-year-old Swiss actress named Evelyne Kraft. The fact that she's Caucasian wasn't the only reason Kraft made so many Chinese heads turn: she spends the entire film clad in a very revealing animal-skin bikini. *Va-va-va-voom! Hubba hubba! Rrrrowwwll!*

Born to wealthy parents in Zurich, Kraft was orphaned at nine and raised by guardians. As a teenager, she quarreled with her court-appointed guardian and turned to acting as a way to escape her unhappy home life. At 17 she became the youngest actress ever accepted into the Theater School in Zurich; soon thereafter, her ambitions (and her

inheritance) fueled aspirations of becoming a movie mogul, and at 19 she co-produced a film in Rome called EVIL EYE, with German actress Anita Ekberg. Evelyne also had a small part in the film, and a cult star was born. From there, she did theater work, studied in the U.S. with actor Jeff Corey, and appeared in about 15 European films before retiring in 1981 to raise a family. Her best-known pictures, other than MIGHTY PEKING MAN, are the German-made LADY DRACULA (1977) and two out of three entries in the German SUPERBUG trilogy (a LOVE BUG rip-off).

"I got the part in MIGHTY PEKING MAN through my German agency," Kraft recalled. "The photographs were sent to Hong Kong, to Shaw Brothers, and they just hired me based on the pictures, based on my looks alone. You didn't need to be a good actress for that movie, because it was all exaggerated. At first I nearly cried, because I said, 'This isn't what I studied acting for!' And of course I couldn't communicate because the director always spoke Chinese, but I got to like Hong Kong a lot and spent a lot of time there and did another film for Shaw Brothers in which I played a kung-fu master, so I learned Cantonese and Mandarin."

The cast of MIGHTY PEKING MAN spent several weeks in remote Mysore, India, shooting the jungle sequences. Kraft remembers the experience fondly, although she says many of her fellow cast and crew became ill from the local food. She says she did all her own stunts—swinging Tarzan-style on vines, riding elephants bareback, swinging a leopard around by the shoulders—even though her costar, he-man Danny Lee, was too chicken to get near the wild beasts. "It was quite dangerous, because we were out in the middle of nowhere, in India. In Hollywood you're in a controlled environment on a set, with animal trainers standing by with tranquilizer guns. We didn't have any of that. We were in the jungle, and there wasn't even a proper hospital nearby." Kraft also performed the incredible feat of shimmying up a tree, her legs wrapped erotically around the trunk, a scene sure to become

Adventurer Johnny Feng (Danny Lee) is captured by Mighty Peking Man.



## RESURRECTION

By Steve Ryfle

## MIGHTY PEKING MAN *King Kong via Hong Kong.*

At first glance, the Shaw Brothers' 1977 demi-epic **MIGHTY PEKING MAN** (Rolling Thunder/Cowboy Booking re-release, 4/99, 100 minutes, unrated) might seem like the usual substandard big-monkey-on-the-loose shenanigans. But truly, this is the greatest reworking of the archetypal man-woman-ape love triangle since the 1933 **KING KONG**. Not that there's much competition: **SON OF KONG** didn't cut it; the Japanese didn't let the ape go head-over-heels in **KING KONG VS. GODZILLA** and **KING KONG ESCAPES**, and the two DeLaurentiis **KONGs** just sucked, as did the Korean-made **A\*P\*E** and the British-made **KONGA**. As for **MIGHTY JOE YOUNG**, he doesn't count because he survives. **MIGHTY PEKING MAN** has a tragic, Kong-like finale in which the heart-broken beast not only careens to his death off a skyscraper; he's blown up in a gasoline explosion first!

To be fair, **Mighty Peking Man** isn't really an ape, but a 10-story-tall prehistoric primate (apparently a gigantic version of the Peking Man, fossils of which were found in China earlier in this century). In the 1960s, **Mighty** awakens, bursts out of a snowy mountainside in the Himalayas, flings boulders at some terrified villagers, and retreats into the jungles of India. A decade later, an expedition to capture the beast is organized by a big-toothed Chinese promoter and led by Johnny (Danny Lee), a dejected young Indiana Jones-type who's just caught his girlfriend sleeping with his brother and really wants to get the hell out of Hong Kong. En route, the explorers are attacked by stampeding elephants that flatten thatch huts, and a vicious tiger that bites off a man's leg. Is this mission really worth it?

Johnny doesn't find **Mighty Peking Man**; it finds him, snatching him up in a big, cloth-covered mechanical paw. Johnny is rescued by the ape's stepchild, the beautiful Samantha, whose parents were killed in a plane crash years before, and who now speaks only jungle gibberish (and, apparently, has discovered a jungle store that stocks makeup and lipstick). When *the girl is snake-bitten (in the crotch area, what luck!)* Johnny sucks out the poison, and they fall



Samantha (Kraft) is happily at home in the jungle before being lured to the big city.

in love. Given the choice of living with a voluptuous blonde in a lush natural paradise, or ruining everything by taking her and the big ape back to civilization, Johnny of course chooses the latter.

From here, it's the usual stuff: **Mighty** is put to work as a gargantuan circus freak (pulling Tonka toys in a **Monster Truck** tractor-pull event) and kept in a cage during off-hours. When Samantha is nearly raped by the slimebag promoter, **Mighty** goes ape-shit and trashes Hong Kong, before the military puts an end to the misunderstood monster.

**MIGHTY PEKING MAN** is equal parts chop-socky flick, **KONG**, **MIGHTY JOE YOUNG**, **TARZAN**, and **GODZILLA** (the final rampage through the miniature city has a particularly Japanese feel), not to mention **THE NAKED GUN** (there are two ro-

mantic montages set to cheeseball music which are funnier, albeit unintentionally, than Leslie Nielsen and Priscilla Presley's romp). Yes, it's the postmodern kitsch factor and the psychotronic elements—obvious miniatures, the actor's eyes peering through the sockets of the ill-fitting monster costume, mismatched film stocks, wild animals that seem doped-up to keep them docile, bombastic music score—that provide much of the entertainment value, but no modern monster film packs as much action and spectacle into 90 minutes. In an era when Hollywood is bankrupting itself on dreck like **VIRUS** and TriStar's **GODZILLA**, **MIGHTY PEKING MAN** is a throwback to those good old days when technical virtuosity wasn't the only thing that mattered, and low budget didn't necessarily mean low-octane. □



The **Mighty Peking Man-in-a-Suit** scales a Hong Kong skyscraper.

a classic. "That was so embarrassing," she said. "It looks terrible!"

Kraft also recalls how her voluptuous (and barely concealed) figure caused a major distraction to a huge crowd of extras on the streets of Delhi, where one of the crucial scenes, the Peking Man's first appearance in the civilized world, was shot. "That was funny, because you know how in India all the women are dressed, all covered up? Well, when we were shooting that scene, the director told the crowd, 'Now everybody, act afraid; the monster is over there!' But everybody was

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Exotic Evelyne Kraft plays the beauty who tames the beast.



## CINEMA

By Steve Biodrowski

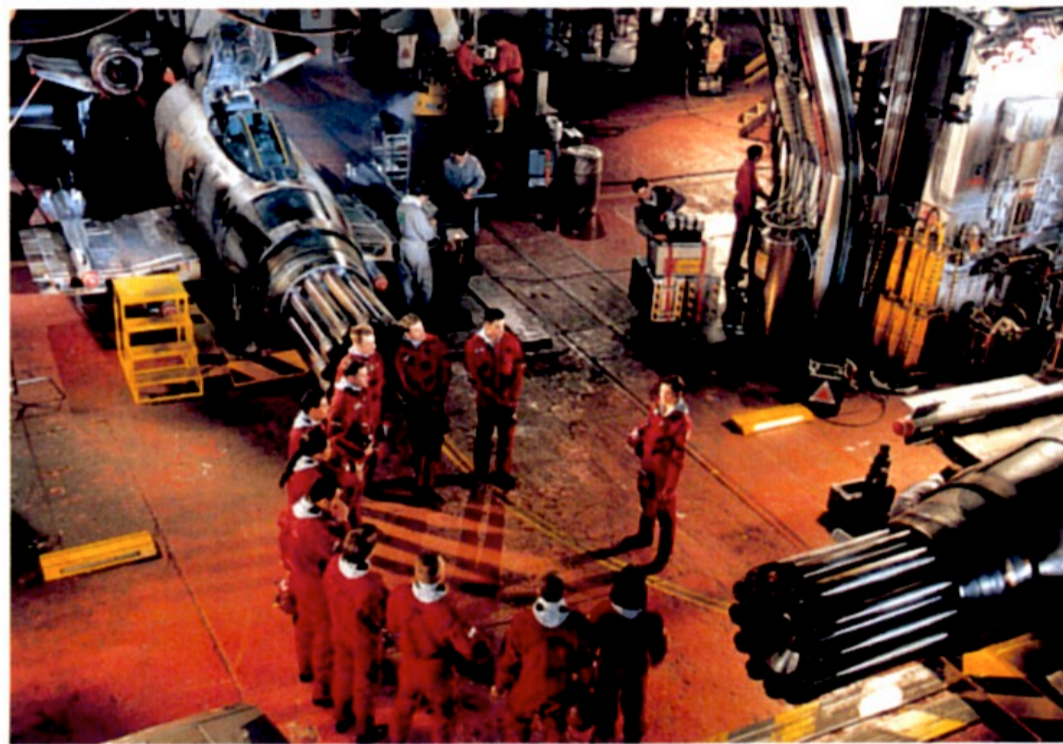
## DEMOGRAPHIC DEMONS

Targeting teen viewers misses the mark.

For unoriginal filmmakers, the great thing about appealing to a youthful demographic is that the intended audience will presumably be too young to recognize what they are seeing as a rehash of older, better movies. Two new films attempt this gambit with more or less success by aiming at teen-agers, while a third targets even younger viewers, to disastrous effect. The first two are so much alike that they must be discussed together: both are obviously derivative films that one would expect to be absolutely awful; yet both turn out to be initially entertaining—up to a certain point; finally, both descend into bathos that confirms one's earlier suspicions about their quality. The third film is so bad that it makes the first two look good.

**WING COMMANDER** (Fox, 3/99, 100 mins, PG-13) gets off to a good start by placing us right in the middle of a crisis and then keeping the momentum going. Freddie Prinze Jr.'s wide-eyed wonder and Matthew Lillard's gung-ho enthusiasm are supported by an impressive cast of older character actors (Tcheky Karyo, Jurgen Prochnow, David Warner). The effect is superficial but engaging—about the best one could expect from a movie derived from a video game that was itself obviously inspired by *STAR WARS*. As long as the film refuses to take itself seriously it remains fun in an

Rachel (Emily Bergl) unleashes her telekinetic fury in the derivative climax of **THE RAGE: CARRIE 2**.



"Angel" Deveraux (Saffron Burrows) delivers a pep talk to her pilots in **WING COMMANDER**, a space opera derived from *STAR WARS* and *DAS BOOT*.

undemanding way. Unfortunately, as the familiar scenes start to pile on, director Chris Roberts actually thinks he can make us sympathize with his characters on a deep emotional level. The attempt at heart-rending sincerity, noble sacrifice, and uplifting spirituality only recalls recycled WWII movies (including *DAS BOOT*) cross-pollinated with the Force. The result provokes guffaws of derogatory laughter that destroy the marginal entertainment value. On the other hand, one ten-year-old kid in the lobby afterward said he loved it.

**THE RAGE: CARRIE 2** (MGM, 3/99, 101 mins, R) is the worst kind of sequel: essentially a remake that doesn't pick up from the original but simply starts over from the beginning. Fortunately, Emily Bergl is fairly appealing as the new telekinetic terror, and director Katt Shea pulls off a few nice scenes; the result is just good enough to make you wish it were better. Unfortunately, Rafael Moreu's script goes to ridiculous lengths to forge a link with its predecessor, mostly with surviving character Sue Snell. Amy Irving sleepwalks through the role, perhaps realizing that the basic plot mechanics prevent her from actually accomplishing anything. (We know there's no chance she will prevent another psychic-powered bloodbath at the conclusion.) Lines like "Are you sure you're not still trying to save someone who died 20 years ago?" don't help.

The pandemonium that finally

erupts is overdone in a failed attempt to surpass the the original. Too many extras get offed when a more precise revenge, pinpointing the real villains instead of innocent bystanders, would have had more impact. The film does manage a gruesomely appropriate retribution for an unrepentant statutory rapist—a moment of good schlock horror—but then throws the effect away by trying to achieve a *Romeo and Juliet*-type romantic-tragic ending. As in **WING COMMANDER**, laughter ensues.

Ironically, laughter does *not* ensue in **BABY GENIUSES** (TriStar, 3/99, 94 mins, PG), the one purported comedy reviewed here. This film is so relentlessly awful one wonders why the studio even bothered to release it. The target audience is presumably toddlers, but it's hard to imagine parents taking them to see a film that says it's a barrel of laughs when a two-year-old sneaks out and wanders through busy intersections and down dark alleys unescorted. The premise (that children are born with *a priori* knowledge and language that they lose when they learn to speak adult language) is interesting, but the story (co-written by producer Steven Paul) fails to elicit a single chuckle, and is often downright stupid. Worst of all, after boring us for an hour-and-a-half, the film has the nerve to cap itself with a musical montage of previous scenes, as if we loved them so much that we'd want to see them again. □

## FILM RATINGS

- Must see
- Excellent
- Good
- Mediocre
- Fodder for MST-3K

## RAVENOUS

Director: Antonia Bird. Writer: Ted Griffin. Fox 2000 3/99. 101 mins. R. With: Guy Pearce, Robert Carlyle, Jeffrey Jones, David Arquette, Jeremy Davies.

Guy Pearce (*L.A. CONFIDENTIAL*) is the haunted Capt. John Boyd, a timid army officer whose ambiguous heroics in the Mexican-American War of 1847 prompt his commander to post him to a remote California outpost in the western Sierra Nevada. Under the rather lax command of the bemused but despairing Col. Hart (Jeffrey Jones), the fort's tiny detachment is chafing under the boredom of long winter months. Their tedious routine ends when Colqhoun (Robert Carlyle) staggers into the fort and relates his horrific tale: he and his fellow travellers ran into fierce winter storms, forcing them to take refuge in a nearby cave. When their meager food ran out, they were forced to cannibalize their fallen companions. Only Colqhoun managed to survive...

As the story progresses, a dark thread of Indian lore, The Windigo, emerges: when a man eats the flesh of another, he takes on the strength and attributes of his prey. The drawback is: once you start snacking on hominids, you can never get enough. As the characters consume more, they become as hard to kill as any Nosferatu, leading up to the gory climactic duel between Boyd and the chief cannibal who hopes to turn the fort into his own personal eatery.

Of course, the issue at hand is a moral choice: does Boyd give in to this new unsavory appetite or resist, and Pearce is excellent as a man fighting a nightmare of moral bankruptcy. In this respect, **RAVENOUS** resembles a vampire flick in frontier dress, with Boyd fighting the seductive offers of renewed vitality and health offered by the Dracula stand-in, with the fort's environs serving as Gothic castle (ironically, the film was shot partially in the Czech Republic and Slovakia!). Least satisfactorily explained is the nature and limitations of the "Windigo" process itself: some cannibals are dispatched with a quick throat-slice; others have to be hit with the proverbial kitchen sink (leading to a nasty scene with a bear-trap).

If the movie stumbles, it's in the consistency of the performances: Pearce, Carlyle and Jones are all fine, but the remaining cast is erratic in the extreme. Most cinephiles will also figure out the film's Big Twist fairly early on, certainly much quicker than its hapless cast. Ultimately, the film is a little too mannered at times to truly cut loose; however, its wit and risk-taking still makes it a savory for those with the patience and gusto to consume it. ●●● Todd French



## BIBLIOFILE

By Dan Cziraky

## AUDIO BOOKS AND A TV ENCYCLOPEDIA: New things to see and hear from the Sci-Fi Channel.

Do you hear what I hear? Well, if you've been checking out the audio-book section, chances are pretty good that you do. Science-fiction, fantasy, and horror are all fairly well represented in the arena of fully realized audio productions. Sometimes, it's just the text of a book being read (often by the author himself), with some appropriate background music. Or, in the case of *The Sci-Fi Channel's Seeing Ear Theatre, Vol. 1* (New Star Publishing, 2 cassettes, approximately 3 hrs, \$18.00), these are fully dramatized audio productions, akin to such old-time radio shows as Orson Welles' *The War of the Worlds* or *CBS Mystery Theater*. In this case, these productions were made for the Sci-Fi Channel's website, *The Dominion* ([www.scifi.com](http://www.scifi.com)). Each story is introduced by noted genre author Harlan Ellison, and features the vocal talents of Mark Hamill, Marina Sirtis, and Michael O'Hare. This first collection of *Seeing Ear Theatre* dramatizations includes three short comedies ("They're Made Out of Meat," "The Toxic Donut," and "Next") by Terry Bisson; Brian Smith's "Into the Sun;" "Think Like a Dinosaur" by James Patrick Kelly; "The Death of Captain Future" by Allen Steele and Brian Smith; John Kessel's "A Clean Escape;" and "The Bigger One" by Gregory Benford. If you enjoy flexing your imagination, it's interesting to sit back and listen to these, and let the images appear in your head. Although the dramas are all well executed, I must admit I preferred the daffy, extremely short "They're Made out of Meat." Two aliens, searching for signs of intelligent life, encounter messages from Earth. They're amazed at the fact that, well, we're basically talking deli platters! After much discussion, they decide nobody would believe them if they even bothered to report us. It reminded me of the original BBC radio productions of Douglas Adams' *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

Speaking of our cable-TV friends, *The Sci-Fi Channel Encyclopedia of TV Science Fiction* by Roger Fulton and John Betancourt (Aspect/Warner Books, 669 pp, illustrated, \$15.99) is a handy guide to over 200 science-fiction, fantasy, and horror-themed shows from the U.S. and Great Britain. Essentially an updated version of Fulton's *The Encyclopedia of TV Science Fiction*, the book even retains some of its original, Anglo-centric spellings. It's a huge effort to try to assimilate over 50 years of science-fiction television into one book—a hit-or-miss prospect, at best. First of all, are there really any new insights left to be discovered on DOCTOR WHO, THE AVENGERS, STAR TREK, BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, THE INCREDIBLE HULK, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, and LOST IN SPACE? Now, I'm assuming that we're all fans of the genre here, and



Numerous old series like DOCTOR WHO (above) are covered for the umpteenth time in *The Sci-Fi Channel Encyclopedia of TV Science Fiction*, with little or no new insight.

that we're all pretty much tired of having the obvious endlessly regurgitated at us. Regarding STAR TREK: "And the Vulcan's own inner turmoil as he strove to reconcile his logical self with the human side of his nature made him the most interesting character." Really? Glad you pointed that out for us, guys! Calling THE MAN FROM UNCLE "...a 1960s escapist fantasy about the far-fetched exploits of a pair of super-spies..." certainly puts it into perspective for me. Considering that almost every show in the book, from THE ADDAMS FAMILY and DARK SHADOWS to THE TWILIGHT ZONE and THE X-FILES have already had entire books (if not several) devoted to them, there's a lot of redundant information. In fact, you have to wonder why they bothered with individual episode synopses for shows like TREK and X-FILES, but only listed episode titles for less familiar shows, like FOREVER KNIGHT, VR5, and AMERICAN GOTHIC. Why, THE ADVENTURES OF BRISCOE COUNTY JR. and THE FLASH didn't even merit the episode title listings! And, can we truly consider THE FLYING NUN fantasy, despite the fact that Harlan Ellison wrote two episodes of this show? Well, there are problems with this book, both on an organizational and a conceptual level. In fact the last chapter, "Series Databank: 41 Obscure

Shows You'll Probably Never Hear of Again," is the most interesting. In less than six pages, they describe some shows that sound far more interesting than most of what's on the air today. I'd love to see COME BACK MRS. NOAH, about a 21st-century British housewife (Molly Sugden) accidentally launched into orbit on a runaway space station, or THE MONSTERS, in which a zoologist discovers that a Loch Ness-type monster not only exists but threatens the future of mankind. Since I actually learned something new, albeit not about the shows on which the book primarily focuses, I'll say that it might be of interest to sci-fi TV completists. However, if you're wondering whether or not this book will fit on shelves already overrun with seventeen STAR TREK reference guides, four different X-FILES companion books, and two each on BATMAN and BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER, then, no, you don't need this book. However, you need a life, very badly.

Speaking of people with personality quirks, those pesky hunter aliens are back in *Predator: Big Game* by Sandy Schofield (Bantam Spectra, 226 pp, \$4.99), a novelization of the Dark Horse Comics mini-series of the same name, scripted by John Arcudi. This time, we find the nasty, dread-locked monster hunting humans in the desert of New Mexico. However, this hunt is just a little different, as full-blooded Navajo Corporal Enoch Nakai will soon learn. The Horned Monster, a legendary fable of the Navajo, has come from the skies, bringing death and blood. Nakai doesn't know it, but he is *Nayenezgani*, the mythical monster-slayer of his people. He must stand alone, with only the spirit of his still-born twin brother *Tobadjishchini* (the one who distracts the monsters) to help him defeat this extra-terrestrial killing machine. Bantam's series of novels based on the two PREDATOR films have all been based on the Dark Horse Comics mini-series, and have all been satisfying extensions of those movies. Since the long-delayed PREDATOR 3 and the abandoned ALIENS VS. PREDATOR films haven't filled the void since Danny Glover and Gary Busey battled the beast in PREDATOR 2, these books have done the job nicely. *Predator: Big Game* departs from the previous entries in the series, in that it doesn't feature the brother of Arnold Schwarzenegger's character in the first film, as did the other two books, *Predator: Concrete Jungle* and *Predator: Cold War* (both by Nathan Archer). Schofield, by the way, is the pen name of husband & wife team Dean Wesley Smith and Kristine Kathryn Rusch, who also wrote *Aliens: Rogue*. Fans of the PREDATOR films will likely enjoy this book, but it's a pretty decent science-fiction story in its own right. □

## One of TV's most chilling horror films.

### STEPHEN KING'S STORM OF THE CENTURY

An ABC-TV Network Presentation of a Greengrass Production. Executive producers: Stephen King, Mark Carliner; senior producer, Thomas Brodek. Directed by Craig R. Baxley. Written for the screen by Stephen King. Cinematography (Color): David Connell. Music: ??, Editing: Sonny Baskin. Production design: Craig Stearns. Sound: David Lee. Casting: Lynn Kressel. 2/99, 6 hrs w/commercials. TV-14.

Mike Anderson.....	Tim Daly
Molly Anderson.....	Debrah Farentino
Andre Linoge.....	Colm Feore
Alton (Hatch) Hatcher.....	Casey Siemaszko
Robbie Beals.....	Jeffrey DeMunn
Cat Withers.....	Julianne Nicholson
Ralph Anderson.....	Dyllan Christopher
Melinda Hatcher.....	Soo Garay
Pippa Hatcher.....	Skye McCole
Sandra Beals.....	Nada Despotovich
Kirk Freeman.....	Denis Forest
Jenna Freeman.....	Nicky Guadagni
Henry Bright.....	Christopher Marren
Carla Bright.....	Jennifer Griffin
Frank Bright.....	Tyler Bannerman
Jack Carver.....	Steve Rankin

by Frederick C. Szebin

Stephen King has come under fire recently for the lack of quality, not in his novels, but in the filmed adaptations of his literary creations. After the network redo of *THE SHINING*, some wondered what could possibly be done with what was left of his unfiled work. (I am surprised nothing has been done with the short story "I Am the Doorway." Quite good, that one.) King silenced critics with yet another six-hour mini series, *STORM OF THE CENTURY*. And, with no pun intended, this winter-based Stephen King Novel For Television is one of the most chilling horror films ever made for TV.

In Part One, we get to know key residents of Little Tall Island, a spit of land just off of Maine, one of those charming New England communities that takes care of its own, holds its secrets, and leaves the rest of the world to itself. Constable Michael Anderson (Daly) arrests stranger Linoge, who, just to get some attention, kills a kindly old lady. Anyone who enters his line of vision is treated to the scathing and sometimes unnerving truth about themselves—some of it illegal, all of it morally reprehensible. As the snowstorm and Linoge's supernatural powers cut Little Tall off from the rest of the world, the stranger gives Anderson his cryptic ultimatum: give me what I want, and I'll go away.

Part Two has the town's residents gathered at the town hall's makeshift rescue center to ride out the storm and watch helplessly as Linoge's hold over them quickly



The malevolent stranger Linoge, equipped with his signature wolf's head cane, pays an unwanted visit on a sleepy Maine town in *STORM OF THE CENTURY*.

grows: one teenager, possessed by him, uses Linoge's wolf's head cane to beat her cheating boyfriend to death; old Cora drowns herself in a bathroom sink after writing the ultimatum on the mirrors, and real estate man Robbie (DeMunn) barely holds on with Linoge's taunts of how his mother died scared and alone in a home. Robbie and even Anderson's wife Molly (Farentino) suggest that killing Linoge themselves might not be such a bad idea.

Part Three brings it all together as more of the townspeople suffer Linoge's tortures, and he finally reveals the meaning of his demand: he is an ancient being nearing death, and he wants one of the town's children to raise as his own—to teach and remake in his image. It is here that King shows how a town can fall apart when it tries to take care of itself. Anderson's wife takes part in the lottery to select the unfortunate child; Anderson is literally beaten down when he tries to stop it, and their own child is chosen—a move that destroys their marriage and cuts Anderson's ties to the town.

King does here what he does in his best long fiction: he creates an entire town with recognizable neighbors whose previously silent foibles surge to the surface and destroy them. *STORM* is not only tightly written—and one of the few mini-series worthy of the lengthened running time—it is tightly directed by Baxley and remains suspenseful throughout.

Each episode builds on the previous one, bringing the narrative to its only logical, and genuinely frightening, conclusion.

With a budget of over \$30 million, every penny is on the screen. At no time does the setting of this snow-buried town look like a set—a fault in nearly every other purported epic for television. The special effects are startling, and never used to prop up the story, which stands quite well on its own. Although Tim Daly couldn't keep a Maine accent to save his life, he is quite good, as is the rest of the cast, populated by character actors who can keep the accent going, flesh out their roles, and bring immediacy to the proceedings, while Feore is a subtle menace, able to convey confident evil with a look.

*STORM* shows why Stephen King became so famous in the first place: he is able to get inside the minds of his characters and have them quickly or quietly fall apart before us. The evil may be otherworldly, but the ultimate effects stem from very human drama. Gore doesn't do that; special effects don't do that. Only good storytelling can hook the audience, make them care when something happens not only to a main character but also to a supporting player—because time was taken to show us that person and allow us to care. The true nature of evil is in all of us, no matter how pious. Stephen King knows that, and can make it work. He and Baxley do it here exceptionally well. □

### MADE-FOR-TELEVISION

#### ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Director: Nick Willing. Screenplay: Peter Barnes, from the novel by Lewis Carroll. Creature Effects: Jim Henson's Creature Shop. NBC-TV, Hallmark Entertainment, 2/99. 3 hrs w/commercials. TV-PG. With: Tina Majorino, Martin Short, Ben Kingsley, Miranda Richardson, Whoopie Goldberg, Gene Wilder, Christopher Lloyd, Peter Ustinov, George Wendt, Robbie Coltrane.

NBC has been doing a great justice to fantasy fans over the past few years, with *THE ODYSSEY*, *MERLIN*, and *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS* being given the time of expanded formats to tell their tales on the small screen with big screen aspirations. With \$21 million, *ALICE IN WONDERLAND* should have been another jewel in that crown, but it isn't quite, despite everything it has going for it.

The story is the same. Lewis Carroll's surreal visions are brought to life like never before, with endearing and wondrous visuals, beautiful set design, incredibly likable players and sure direction using everything from complex CGI to the elegant simplicity of forced perspective, but much of the production lays flat. Pretty Tina Majorino is not to be blamed, for she is a very good Alice, heavy with a worrisome brow, or beaming with a lovely smile. The stars that get to show any of their human faces through the delightful makeup (Short, Goldberg, Richardson, etc.) go for the gusto in beautifully overwhelming performances. And this is the perfect vehicle for Jim Henson's Creature Shop to work their magic with some cute sentient animals that get across their emotions as well as their more flesh-based co-stars.

It should be utterly charming, but for the life of me only the last few minutes really raised a smile to my face, despite a few chuckles here and there throughout the evening's entertainment. Perhaps my feeling is based on familiarity with the material, or the fact that I'm not nine years old anymore. Or is it that Mr. Disney weighs heavily on my mind? That wouldn't be fair. Much of this incarnation is directed at a breakneck pace perfect for the unreality of Alice's situation, but using all of Carroll's work may ultimately have brought down the more effective parts of the picture. With all due respect to the author's work and memory (I don't care about any pedophilic aspects read into it. Doesn't impress me.), the narrative does trudge on a bit. *ALICE IN WONDERLAND* certainly would have been a dog in four hours, but it may have been a peach in two. For all the cinematic craft, and how lovely it all is, *ALICE* tripped on her way through the forest and took a long, lumbering time in getting up. I feel like such a grouch.

● 1/2 Frederick C. Szebin

#### DR WHO: THE MIND OF EVIL

Director: Timothy Combe. Writer: Don Houghton. CBS/Fox Video, released date 1/99. With: Jon Pertwee, Katy Manning, Roger Delgado, Nicholas Courtney, Pik-Sen Lim.

I have to admit that I don't think (from what little I've seen thus far) that the BBC's long-running *DR. WHO* series hit its stride until Tom Baker took the role in 1974. Certainly his prede-

cessor, Jon Pertwee, had a style and charm all his own, but the 1970 adventure "The Mind of Evil" only hints at that in a mediocre and overblown story. In this six-part tale, the Doctor and companion Jo Grant find themselves embroiled with two villains: the ever-aggravating Master (Delgado) and an alien brain the Master has brought with him encased in a machine that is to erase evil tendencies from hardcore criminals. Unfortunately, the beastie decides that it can get more to eat if it goes out on its own. There is also some subterfuge involving the Chinese delegate at the World Peace conference when he is murdered by his military advisor, who is under control of the Master, who plans to use the convicts at the prison where the mind wipe machine goes out of control to help him hijack a nerve gas missile in the hands of UNIT (the United Nations Intelligence Taskforce) to destroy the Peace Conference.

It all gets a bit convoluted, with the mind-controlled Chinese officer (Lim) leaving by the third episode so the good Doctor can focus on the hijacked missile and the Master's intruding alien mind muncher. As was often the case with DOCTOR WHO, the actors rise admirably above the show's back lot production values. The two story lines really don't fit together very well. Placed side by side, they seem like filler for each other to complete a six-part story that could have been told in four. Not being too familiar with Pertwee's episodes, Jo Grant seems hopelessly useless most of the time, not like Sarah Jane or Leela, who could usually hold their own against much of what was thrown at the Doctor.

"The Mind Of Evil" is strictly for the hardest and most curious of diehard DOCTOR WHO fans who might enjoy the historical curiosity of this black-and-white adventure that was originally shot in color. The only color footage, though, exists at the end of the tape, a replay from a scene early in the story that shows the Doctor's fine red coat, Pertwee's handsome silver hair, and Bessie's shiny yellow exterior. Fortunately, later stories have been salvaged in their original format and are available to all for better or worse. This one is a lesser adventure, a bit long in the tooth. ● 1/2 Frederick C. Szebin

## INVASION EARTH

Directors: Patrick Lau (episodes 1-3) and Richard Laxton (episodes 4-6). Writer: Jed Mercurio. Aired on Sci Fi Channel 12/98. CBS/FOX Video release date: 1/99. 262 mins. With: Fred Ward, Maggie O'Neill, Phyllis Logan, Vincent Regan.

This sprawling, impressive, though not all together satisfying \$7.5 million mini series co-produced by BBC-Scotland and the Sci Fi Channel begins when Flight Lieutenant Chris Drake (Regan) disregards orders and shoots down a UFO. The survivor of the crash is Terrell, a WWII-era human who voluntarily went with the white-skinned aliens to learn their culture. What he



CBS/Fox Video continues to release episodes of the DR. WHO TV series. The most recent to make its bow on cassette, "The Mind of Evil," stars John Pertwee, the third Doctor.

learned is that a race called the NDs is systematically destroying every race it comes in contact with. Now, they have reached Earth. At the same time as Drake's air fight, scientist Dr. Amanda Tucker (O'Neill) picks up an unusual satellite transmission aimed into deep space. A formal investigation is launched by NATO-assigned U.S. Air Force officer Major General David Reece (Ward); and soon Drake, Tucker and Reece discover that they are all ND fodder in a subtle plan by the aliens to breed men out of the race, leaving women to become human cattle, breeding for the ND's purposes.

The cast is uniformly excellent, and handsome CGI gives the program an impressive scale, but Mercurio's script sabotages the effective moments of surprise, suspense and fear by being so frustratingly typical. As the series progresses, it gets slower, so that by episode five the ND invasion is progressing at a genuinely stately pace. Fortunately, the pace picks up in that episode's last 10 minutes and in episode six, when the ND's make their move. Characters act as exposition experts, telling us what's going on in snatches of dialogue that seem more like wild guesses, and Drake becomes an alien expert merely by being the one who shot the first one down, and no matter how many boners this character pulls he still remains a close member of the team, a military improbability. The script is full of such holes, like letting Tucker continue secret experiments on her own after being infected by ND DNA and showing signs of becoming more like them! There is a satisfying down-beat ending, and exciting moments throughout, but it all could have been cut down to a possibly more effective two hours or so. As it stands, the effects are nice, Scotland is pretty, and alien invasions seem to be able to move as rapidly as continental plates.

● 1/2 Frederick C. Szebin

## SPACE TRUCKERS

Director: Stuart Gordon. Writer: Ted Mann; story by Stuart Gordon and Ted Mann. Production Designer: Simon Murton. Special Effects Supervisors: Brian Johnson and Paul Gentry. Additional FX and Make Up by Greg Cannon, Optic Nerve, and Screaming Mad George. HBO-TV, 1/99. 100 mins. PG-13. With: Dennis Hopper, Stephen Dorff, Debi Mazar, Charles Dance, George Wendt, Barbara Crampton.

Although shot in a widescreen format in anticipation of a theatrical release, this independent production wound up making its debut on HBO-TV after failing to find a domestic distributor. Certainly no STAR WARS, this charming bit of camp still didn't deserve the obscurity of cable. It would have been a fun viewing experience on the big screen thanks to nice production design and effects. Space Trucker John Canyon (Hopper) hooks up with his fiancee (Mazar) and young jock Mike (Dorff) when they get into some trouble in a space bar after evil pork merchant George Wendt is sucked out a window butt first. To get off the station they accept a secret shipment that turns out to be the bio-mechanical Geiger-inspired super killing machines created by scientist Macanudo (Dance) who had his own creation turned against him and rebuilt himself into a cyborg space pirate with a crew that does everything pirates do, except say "Arrg!" Macanudo inadvertently releases the killer bots and the rest of the story has everyone trying to avoid them as they attack in ever increasing waves.

Little winks of the eye are given to STAR WARS, 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, ALIEN, BARBARELLA and even FLESH GORDON in an amusing bedroom scene between Mazar and Dance that seems dropped right out of that early 1970s softcore cult hit. The entire production is played light and for fun, and although it is never drop dead hilarious, SPACE TRUCKERS is an unchallenging bit of pulp puff to supply a smile on a rainy Saturday afternoon, or during a fit of insomnia. ●● 1/2 Frederick C. Szebin

## TOM CLANCY'S NETFORCE

Director: Robert Lieberman. Writer: Lionel Chetwynd. ABC-TV 2/99. Four hours w/commercials. With: Scott Bacula, Joanna Goong, Kris Kristopherson, Brian Dennehy, Judge Reinhold, Xander Berkeley.

In the first half-hour of this over-long Internet thriller snooze-fest, Kris Kristopherson (he of the exceedingly dry delivery) makes a comment that it might have been better in the good old days when letters could be sent with good old fashioned postage stamps. Amen to that, brother. Because if this is any example of the type of "thriller" we can expect in the information age, then let's pull the plug now and stop wasting all that phone time.

In the year 2005, the FBI has created Netforce, a branch of law fighters independent of Hoover's brainchild that uses technology of the day to police the Internet. It seems that the Mafia has joined forces with their Chinese counterpart to do their dirty deeds over the phone lines, so of course

Alex Michaels (Bacula) and his crack team led by Steven Day (Kristopherson) use everything in their futuristic arsenal, including E-warrants, video gun sights, and lots of keyboard time to make sure the net is safe for anyone wanting to download fake dirty pictures. So, there's a lot of airtime given to false leads, poor detective work, and plot twists that aren't all that twisty that lead to the door of Bill Gates-type Will Stiles (Reinhold), who wants to use his ingenious new web browser to corner the information market and rule the world or something with the help of a group of country-fied rednecks he broke out of a maximum security prison by using the—gasp!—Internet. Shows just how unsafe our immediate future is, I guess.

There is lots of dark, misty cinematography with plenty of the shadows and silhouettes that pass for visual style these days—or that at least try to cover the multitude sins created by inadequate budgets and shooting schedules. Actors staring concernedly at computer screens can be gripping entertainment, but only if the viewer has an emotional investment in gripping drama. NETFORCE doesn't have that. Director Lieberman keeps his camera moving, and all the actors do their best, but best-selling novelist and co-executive producer Clancy hasn't given them the material to bite into. The always good Dennehy is particularly wasted as country-fied Presidential aide spewing ridiculous animal-based homilies whenever he gets angry, which is in every scene given to him. Even a shorter running time couldn't have helped this techno-mush that purports that the destruction of the Internet would mean world calamity. A brief nuisance, perhaps, but maybe using the Net to launch missiles, terrorize hospitals and airlines and other such nastiness might have been more immediate, and certainly more interesting.

○ Frederick C. Szebin

## THE SCORE By Randall D. Larson

## COMING ATTRACTIONS! *The two-minute film scores of John Beal.*

This music is powerful, like good film music should be. It supercharges the emotional impact of what is on screen. Like the best film scores, this works as a component of celluloid drama, proffering palette-full of interesting nuances. Unlike the best film scores, however, it's only two minutes long.

This is music for trailers—those two- to four-minute “Coming Attractions” that run in theaters before the movie starts, and those 15-, 30-, and 60-second spots that mingle among the commercials on your television set. Their purpose is to sell movies. In a hurry. The music is designed to grab your attention. Quickly.

Contrary to popular belief, trailers rarely contain music from the films they promote. This is because the trailer is usually made before the film's score has been recorded. Composing for trailers is one of the most challenging tasks in film music. The composer must create multiple sensations of thrills, intensity, adventure, romance, or whatever the marketing department is trying to accentuate about the film they're advertising, and relate it quickly in a multitude of musical sound bytes.

John Beal has been composing music for theatrical and television trailers since the 1980s. Unlike other composers who score trailers as a step up the ladder toward a career in movie scoring, Beal composes exclusively for trailers. With a versatile background in pop and rock music—having performed and arranged for such stars as Olivia Newton-John, B.B. King, Gladys Knight, and Johnny Mathis—Beal worked as supervisor of music recording for more than 20 TV specials or mini-series, including the Emmy Award-winning score for Stephen King's *IT*. His mentors include renowned percussionist and composer William Kraft, African Ethnomusicologist Craig Woodson, and film composers Earl Hagen, Dominic Frontiere, and George Duning. Prior to launching Reeltime Music Incorporated and devoting himself almost entirely to scoring trailers, Beal composed the music for films such as *THE FUNHOUSE* and *TERROR IN THE AISLES*, as well as several comedy and dramatic TV series.



John Beal has made a career of scoring trailers, including genre items like *I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER*.

Since 1984, Beal has become the industry's leading provider of original scores for trailers. His music has been heard by more moviegoers than most feature film composers, and he is trusted by virtually every major director and studio to write original music to help sell their films. Beal's list of over 500 theatrical and TV trailer scores includes campaigns for such hit films as *SPECIES II*, *VOLCANO*, *ALADDIN*, *I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER*, *DEADLY BLESSING*, *GHOST*, and *DEAD AGAIN*. This is Sound Byte Film Music at its finest.

Often a composer has not even been hired by the time the trailer is in production. Trailers are therefore scored with recycled music from other films or with original music composed especially for the trailer. Even if the film's music is available in time, it may not lend itself to the style of a marketing campaign. “Sometimes we sell an intimate two-character story with big, sweeping thematic material, because the score, although perfect for the drama, is just too small in scope for generating ticket sales,” said Beal.

Science fiction and horror trailers have afforded Beal the opportunity to unleash his musical prowess through a deft cohesion of electronic and orchestral music. For *THE PAGEMASTER*, Beal used electronically sampled instru-

ments simulated by computer. “The producers tried a half dozen other composers using big orchestras at considerable expense,” said Beal. “They finally came back to me, and Joel Rosenbaum turned my sketches into an amazing orchestration, which really helped me enhance the animation. The producer was amazed that timings could be caught mathematically. He seemed under the impression you played along with the picture until everything came out right!”

His comedic trailer music for *THE MASK* remains one of his favorites. “I got to write in the style of Danny Elfman gone over the top!” he grinned. For *SPECIES II*, Beal was asked to create a piece similar to the slow-rolling-swell-into-big-hit that caused people to jump out of their seats in *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS*. Apparently Beal succeeded, because a number of people on the Internet accused him of “stealing” the idea. “Films like *DEAD AGAIN* and *BODY PARTS* were the hardest,” said Beal. “They are primarily soundscapes, and were done prior to having all the wonderful electronic samples available today.” Beal used ordinary sounds and then pitched, warbled, washed, and reversed them until he came up with the sense of dread required.

The musical needs of trailers are not always the same as those of the film they are advertising. “A

score which is perfect for a film is often not constructed in such a way as to work well in the short burst of a trailer,” said Beal. “An original trailer score must incorporate a style appropriate to the film while serving the needs of the often mind-numbing flashing of short scenes and bursts of dialog and narration.” In the sound-byte world of advertising, the music must instantly reach an audience, convincing them in two minutes that they Must See This Movie! A trailer score must flow smoothly, glue its short, rapid-fire scenes together, and help the viewer come away with a true understanding of the film. The frantic pace of a trailer carries over into its production. Beal prefers to have a week to compose, orchestrate, and record a trailer, but he has been known to turn one around in only two days. “I can write an entire trailer, including the ‘master ready’ final orchestral sample mock-up, in anywhere from three to eight hours,” said Beal. “I’d rather not, but I do. Then I spend another four-eight hours grooming each individual part and getting the mix as good as I can. With a live orchestra, I need extra lead time to properly orchestrate, copy, and book the best studio and finest players Hollywood has to offer.”

“The most exciting terror trailer I ever did was for *DEADLY BLESSING*, a film which was later scored by James Horner,” said Beal. “The trailer producers liked *THE OMEN* and asked—without temp tracking—if I could do something in that style. I wrote a cue combining the structure of tritone polychords in progression with specially written Latin lyrics for the choir. It came out pretty hair-raising. I got a standing ovation for that trailer from the orchestra, and many stayed to hear the mixdown session.”

Inexplicably, the day after the trailer score was recorded, United Artists sent a representative to the studios who seized all the masters and cassettes. “All I had was the cassette I walked out with at the end of the session,” said Beal. “I’m told they literally burned all the materials that same day! Kinda spooky. They used it for the trailers, though. Go figure. *X-FILES* stuff.” □

## THE MUMMY WALKS

continued from page 39

said, "Tell her not to worry. It's just a Denver mudpack."

In truth, Virginia had reason to worry: Pierce had experimented with a makeup that was very severe. As a Universal memo of September 22, 1944 later confided: "As originally planned, these scenes were actually to be made with trick photography. However, after we discovered that the makeup and conditions under which Miss Christine would have to work were apt to cause serious results to her features, this plan was abandoned...."

What followed was horrible enough. Christine would never forget Jack Pierce's painstaking application of the "Denver Mudpack": "I was in the makeup chair, I think, at 4:30 in the morning. They took little patches of cotton, wet with witch hazel, put them on and lined them to fill in the youthful contours. Then Jack put on the 'Denver Mudpack,' just a little bit at a time, then lined that with wrinkles, then blow-dried it—each little patch until I was an absolutely rigid mask. And we made a mistake in wardrobe. We had the arms bare—so we had to do the arms and the hands, too. Well, it took forever, and, of course, a very human thing happened—I had to go to the bathroom. Jack's wife was a body makeup lady, and she took me, like a child, to the bathroom, and pulled my panties down. Well, I have this sense of humor that's very close to the surface, but I couldn't laugh because the makeup would crack and they would have to start all over. It was just too ridiculous!"

Fortified by a malted milk, Virginia, in full mummy guise, was driven to the back lot. A crowd congregated to see the female mummy rise from its swampy grave: "They took me out on the back lot, where the grave was dug, right in the soil—not clean, sifted sand! Then they covered me with burnt cork; then they sprayed it with water. Here, I'm lying in the earth with only my nostrils open for breathing—and I began to think of all the things that crawl in the earth.... Then, at the last minute, they put the burnt cork (that looks like soil) over my face. I had to get up, and walk—into a stinking, slimy, infested pool, covered with algae, down two or three steps into the pond, and wade in up to my neck... Well, for the first time in my life, I was ready to scream, 'No, I can't do it!' because it's so awful to look at! But then I thought, 'You wanted to be an actress—let's go!' Anyway, finally it



Chaney's eye is clearly visible through the Mummy mask as Kharis sips tana juice administered by Egyptian priest Peter Coe (l) and acolyte Martin Kosleck.

was over, and then everybody was very helpful. The limousine was there, and they had a drink for me, and towels, and the whole bit."

Completed at a cost of \$127,535 (about \$4500 over budget), the film played its first engagements just before Christmas, 1944, when it opened in Hollywood on a double bill with *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*. On March 30, 1945, *CURSE* headlined at New York's Rialto. *New York Post* film critic Archer Winsten noted: "Lo! It's a female mummy... You will be safe in assuming there has never been a mummy half as well-built or a quarter as good-looking. Just for the record, her name is Virginia Christine. Lon Chaney pursues her, as who would not..."

The critics had long had it in for the Mummy, and John McManus of New York's *PM* almost made *THE MUMMY'S CURSE* a national wartime social and economic issue: "Because the big studios have first priority on available film, there is a shortage of film available for independents, educational films, etc. This is how one big studio expends its film ration."

Perhaps Universal was finally chastened: *THE MUMMY'S CURSE* ended the series. Virginia Christine went on to a long career, including a lucrative 20-year stint as Mrs. Olson of the Folger's Coffee commercials. *CURSE* would haunt her all her life, although she claimed she didn't mind: "After all," she'd laugh, "that was one of my life experiences!" She died in 1996.

As for Lon Chaney, he again donned the Mummy makeup for 1959's Mexican feature *LA CASA DEL TERROR*, as a mummy who's also a werewolf; and for the famed 1962 *ROUTE 66* TV episode "Lizard's Leg and Owl's Wing," in which he also appeared as the Hunchback of Notre Dame

and the Wolf Man. (On the same show, Boris Karloff appeared in *Frankenstein Monster* makeup, and Peter Lorre got into the act in a cape and top hat.)

"...I guess from the horror aspect, the character was okay," said Chaney in a late-in-life interview with *Castle of Frankenstein* magazine. Lon Chaney died in 1973 at the age of 67.

While Kharis was not included in the monster rallies *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944) and *HOUSE OF DRACULA* (1945), he was given the honor of meeting Abbott and Costello. For Universal-International, Bud and Lou had enjoyed success with *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* (1948), *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE INVISIBLE MAN* (1951), and *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE* (1953). The tail end of the cycle was *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE MUMMY* (1955). There was a certain significance in the casting of *The Mummy* (here called "Klaris"): Eddie Parker, a stunt man who had reportedly doubled Chaney in *THE MUMMY'S TOMB*. Parker roared as the Mummy—a strange and ineffective touch. Directed by Charles Lamont, the film was shot October 28 to November 24, 1954, on a budget of \$738,259—which was apparently more than Universal had spent on the original *THE MUMMY* and all its sequels combined. It was released in May of 1955, and proved Abbott and Costello's final film with a monster—and last movie for Universal-International.

As we consider the 1999 remake of *THE MUMMY*, we naturally remember the original Im-Ho-Tep and Anck-es-en-Amon, Kharis and Ananka, that beauty parade of starlets in negligees, that wild-eyed coven of lecherous high priests. And as the new Mummy

"comes to life," they—and Amon-Ra—are watching. □

## LASERBLAST

continued from page 53

offers something memorable and worthwhile. One wishes more directors would follow his lead and make movies that matter rather than pictures that are nothing more than grist from the production mill. It is disturbing to think that an entire generation has come of movie-going age without experiencing a Kubrick film in a theater; fortunately, Kubrick's cinematic savvy and genius are more than adequately preserved on video to be savored and enjoyed again and again. His films provide for endless hours of entertainment, thought, and discussion, and no one who truly appreciates cinema would be without them. □

## EVELYNE KRAFT

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looking at me—all these Indian men and women were so shocked because I am standing there wearing these animal skins. They were all staring at me, instead of looking in the direction they were supposed to."

Unfortunately, Samantha dies at the end of the picture, struck by a spray of helicopter gunfire aimed at her beastly outsize boyfriend. But Kraft is delighted that, 22 years later, Samantha and *Mighty Peking Man* are rekindling their love affair for modern audiences. "I am very surprised at the interest in this film, because it's a B-class movie. If you look at the production, it cost \$500,000, compared to the *KING KONG* film which cost \$30 million! But there's something nice about this film. You could fall in love with this monster, because he's sensitive and even civilized, you know." □

## TARZAN

continued from page 7

never clashing with the traditional animation or loosing the "painterly" style of the backgrounds. "If you watch the movie, I dare you to tell me where the Deep Canvas stops and the 2-D starts. It's the marriage of the 2-D with this 3-D process that the animators have done so masterfully. It all feels like it has depth and dimension."

This depth and dimension has also been applied to the characters and story of *TARZAN*, so much so, that the filmmakers were careful when fashioning the supporting players. "We wanted Tarzan to be the most memorable character in the film. So, we tried to have the other characters support that," said Arnold, adding, "Our goal was not

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to have the supporting characters be the most interesting. Tarzan should be the most memorable."

Arnold also noted that the story and the journey of TARZAN is one that will resonate with audiences, especially today. "Tarzan realizes that it doesn't matter which family you're born to. Life is about surrounding yourself with people you love and who love you and if people take that away from the film, I feel we've accomplished a lot."

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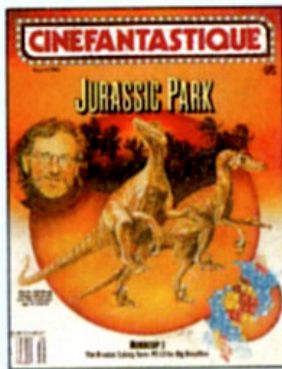
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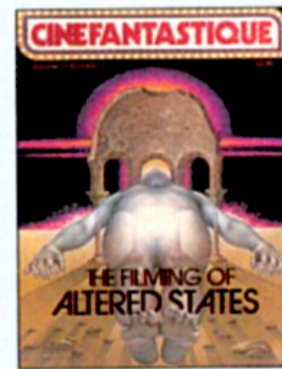
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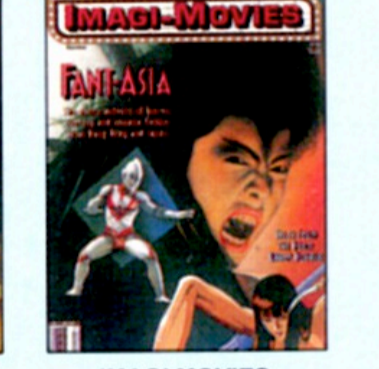
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